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The Beacon Series

THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES

TEACHER'S EDITION WITH HELPER

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A GRADED COURSE OF STUDY FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES

BY
HENRY HALLAM SAUNDERSON

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INTRODUCTION

THE Bible cannot be dispensed with in using these lessons. The teacher and each pupil should have a copy in his hands. One important aim of the lessons is to give added familiarity with the book.

The use of the American Revised Version is earnestly recommended. If possible, each person should have his own, but all of a uniform edition, with large type.

To avoid the possibility of confusion, the following explanations of abbreviations are given:

Matthew 9:35 means, of course, the 35th verse of the 9th chapter.

Matthew 9:35–38 means all the verses from the 35th to the 38th inclusive, in the 9th chapter.

Matthew 9:35, 38 means only the 35th and the 38th verses of the 9th chapter.

Matthew 9:35 to 10:4 means all the verses from the 35th verse of the 9th chapter to the 4th verse of the 10th chapter inclusive.

Matthew 9:35, 10:4 means only the 35th verse of the 9th chapter and the 4th verse of the 10th chapter.

Matthew 9:35–37, 10:4–6 means the verses from the 35th to the 37th inclusive in the 9th chapter and the verses from the 4th to the 6th inclusive in the 10th chapter.

From these examples, probably all the Biblical references will be clearly understood.

H. H. S.

THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES

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DIVISION I

THE DISCIPLES WITH JESUS

1. The Call of the Disciples.
2. The First Preaching of the Disciples.
3. Two Ideas of the Kingdom of God.
4. The Disciples Disheartened.
5. The New Hope.
6. The Great Commission.

I. The Call of the Disciples.

WE are already familiar with the life and teaching of Jesus, and we know something of his purposes for his disciples. But we are now to begin the study of the life and work of the men who established the Christian church. They began by being learners with Jesus. They had no thought of the large work they were to do. They were busy with their common occupations when Jesus came and called them to be his disciples. They did not know what Jesus had in mind to teach them or to bid them do.

Our lesson to-day deals with the stories of how some of these men were called to be learners, or disciples, of Jesus. In studying these stories try to look at the events from the standpoint of these men who were called, not from the standpoint of Jesus.

For example, James and John were fishers on the sea of Galilee. When Jesus called them they were in their boat near the shore. Their father, and some men whom they hired in their work, were with them. They were mending their nets; they had been at work in their fishing and the nets were broken, and they were mending them with their minds intent on going on with their fishing. Jesus appears upon the shore; "and straightway he called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went after him."

What a strange experience it was for them! It was a new kind of life to which they went, a life full of novelty. And great hardships were to follow; but of these they had no forebodings.

We have not the stories of the call of each one of the twelve disciples, but we have the picturesque stories of the call of a few of them, and these may be taken as typical. Turn to your Bibles and let us get a clear idea of just how some of these things happened.

What great preacher had been at work before Jesus began to preach? Matthew 3: 1–3.

How was his work related to that of Jesus? Matthew 3: 13–15.

Not long after Jesus began to preach he began to gather a company of disciples, Matthew 4: 17–23. See also Mark 1: 14–20 and Luke 5: 1–11.

To what occupation had these disciples belonged?

Now read another story of a man of a different occupation: Matthew 9:9. See also Mark 2:13–17 and Luke 5:27–32.

Were the conditions of discipleship easy? See Matthew 8:18–22.

Was it hard to be "fit for the kingdom of God"? See Luke 9:57–62.

Did it sometimes call for sacrifice? See Matthew 19:21–24. See also Peter's question in Matthew 19:27.

Observe the list of names in Mark 3:16–19.

Also observe Luke's phrase, "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." Luke 1:1–4.

II. The First Preaching of the Disciples.

MANY people became disciples, or learners, of Jesus. Some of them associated themselves with Jesus, giving up their ordinary occupations, and traveling with him wherever he went. Others accepted his teaching and put it to practical use in their lives, applying it to their ordinary work and social relationships. Indeed, there is very little said by Jesus about the special relationships in the group of his followers; but his teaching applies to the normal life of men in human society.

Out of this large number of people who accepted his teaching Jesus at one time chose twelve men to go out and preach; at another time he chose seventy. The twelve men who were chosen were his first messengers or preachers. See Luke 6: 13. Some of these men had been with him constantly, receiving his instruction. Far and wide there was an interest in the teaching of Jesus, and Jesus sent these men out, two by two, in different directions to preach. When the seventy were sent out they were sent in the same manner.

Again try to imagine what it meant to these men to do this. What a novel experience it was to them! We shall see presently that they were enthusiastic about the results. They had the joy of success, and they could not know the trying times that were to follow in the next two or three years.

This was the beginning of apostleship for the twelve specially chosen disciples. When they were learners with Jesus they were disciples; when they were sent out to preach they were apostles. How long each trip lasted we do not know, but they returned to their master to continue in his companionship and in learning from him.

Now in your Bibles read the stories of these men on this great undertaking:

I. Jesus appointing disciples to be apostles.
   (*a*) The need which Jesus saw. Matthew 9: 35 to 10: 1.
   (*b*) Choosing twelve to be apostles. Mark 3: 13–19 and Luke 6: 12–16.

II. The first preaching journeys. Mark 6: 6–13. They

were prepared for a quick trip. Matthew 10: 5–11 and Luke 9: 1–6.

Jesus followed also to preach. Matthew 10: 40 to 11: 1.

See what Jesus said about following. Matthew 10: 23.

III. The return from the first trip. Mark 6: 30–33 and Luke 9: 10–11.

IV. The second preaching journeys. Luke 10: 1–11. Compare this passage with Matthew 10: 5–11 and observe the similarity.

V. The return from the second journeys. Luke 10: 17–20.

III. Two Ideas of the Kingdom of God.

JESUS preached a great deal about the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of God. The two phrases mean the same thing. We use the word "heaven" meaning the immortal life beyond the grave; the life into which people enter after death. But this is not at all what is meant by "the Kingdom of Heaven." Jesus meant that on earth, in this life, men are to accept God as their king and do His will. If men would do this, there would be peace and happiness. Men would enter into right relations with each other. Men doing God's will would live lives of usefulness and service. No man would act selfishly. Every man would take into account the good of other men. When we use "the Lord's prayer" we all pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is what Jesus meant by the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The disciples thought Jesus intended to establish a kingdom for himself right there among their own people. They thought it would be a good deal like other kingdoms, and that there would be some very honorable positions to which Jesus would appoint his followers. As time went on their hopes and ambitions grew.

Jesus, then, had one idea of the kingdom, and his disciples had another. Jesus saw the evidence of the coming of the kingdom of God, and preached that it was at hand. This deepened in the minds of the disciples the conviction that their master was about to set up a kingdom. There were many things that Jesus said which the disciples failed to understand fully.

Contrast these two ideas of the kingdom. Jesus looked upon the kingdom which he was establishing in the earth as a kingdom of kindness and good-will. The disciples hoped for a kingdom of display and material glory. Jesus sought to teach them that the way into the kingdom was to give unselfish service. They thought that Jesus was to establish a kingdom of authority, in which they would receive honor and reward. With Jesus the idea was, How much can you give for the good of men? With the disciples the question often asked was, How much can we get for ourselves?

Now look up the following references,

Mark 10:35–45. Notice the contrast between "Grant that *we* may sit, one on thy right hand and one on thy left hand in thy *glory*" and "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to *give* his life." See another account of the same event in Matthew 20:20–28.

There were several occasions when the disciples argued and quarreled among themselves about the authority in the kingdom. See Mark 9:30–37, Luke 9:43–48, and Luke 22:24–27.

Jesus taught that the greatest in the kingdom was the one who unselfishly served and willingly learned. See Matthew 18:1–4, Matthew 23:8–12, and look again at Mark 10:42–44. Jesus considered this very important.

The disciples could not see how Jesus could succeed if his enemies carried out their plots against him. See Matthew 16:21–26. Mark 8:31–37 and Luke 18:31–34. So the disciples, expecting the success of Jesus, could not think that his death was near.

The last night before his death Jesus sought, by a graphic lesson, to teach this idea of self-sacrificing service. By washing the feet of the disciples he showed in an extreme example that their ambition should be service and not selfish honor. See John 13:1–8, 12–17.

IV. The Disciples Disheartened.

WE have seen in the previous lesson that the disciples expected, for Jesus, great material success: that he would become a king among their people. This hope was so firmly fixed in their minds that they quite failed to understand at the time a good deal of what Jesus taught. And they failed to foresee the inevitable events that Jesus anticipated, and that made the tragedy of his life.

If they had any idea of the existence of the plots against his life they did not expect the success of those plots. The arrest of Jesus came suddenly. From the upper room, where the passover feast was eaten together, they went out into the Mount of Olives and into a garden that was on the side of the mountain, the garden of Gethsemane. Here Jesus was arrested, perhaps about midnight. In the early morning he was put upon trial and at nine o'clock in the morning he was crucified.

All this came suddenly, and the disciples were utterly dismayed. It seemed to them that complete disaster had come. Instead of ascending a throne, Jesus had been put to death upon the cross. They had hoped that he was the long-looked-for Messiah, who should have honor from the nation; and he had been rejected by the leaders of their people. It seemed to them that death had destroyed him and his work and his influence. They were completely disheartened; they were filled with unutterable grief.

Some of them, who had been fishermen, went back to their boats and their nets, and tried to take up the old life just where they had left it off. They did not know how completely life had changed for them by the coming of the influence of Jesus.

Now in your Bibles look up some references that give the principal points in this story.

I. The plot against Jesus. Matthew 26:1–5. Matthew 26:14–16. Mark 14:1, 2. Mark 14:10, 11. Luke 22:1–6. John 11:47, 48, 53.

II. Peter's declaration of loyalty in which the others joined. Matthew 26:31–35. Mark 14:27–31. Luke 22:33, 34. John 13:36–38.

III. The disciples sleeping while Jesus prayed. Matthew 26:36, 40–46. Mark 14:32, 37–42. Luke 22:44–46.

IV. When Jesus was arrested the disciples fled. Matthew 26:55–58. Mark 14:48–50, 53, 54. Luke 22:52–55.

V. Peter's outright denial of knowing Jesus. Matthew 26:69–75. Mark 14:66–72. Luke 22:54–62. John 18:15–18, and 18:25–27.

VI. Jesus crucified. Matthew 27:27–35.

VII. The disciples go back to their fishing. John 21:2, 3.

V. The New Hope.

THERE is a beautiful story about the men who went back to their fishing after the death of Jesus. They returned to the sea of Galilee to take up the old life. But those shores could not be the same to them, for wherever they looked they were reminded of Jesus. There was the little bay where Jesus had sat in the boat and taught the people on the shore. There was the field sloping up from the shore, and, if they saw "a sower go forth to sow," they thought of the beautiful parable of Jesus, and saw the shallow ground, the thorns, the beaten path, the good soil. Birds flying overhead recalled the voice that said "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them." The sea where he had voyaged with them; the streets of Capernaum where they had walked together; the synagogue where he had taught; that house over there where the men had torn the hole in the roof to let down the man, who could not rise from his bed, but whose friends were determined that he should hear Jesus; everything recalled the Master.

These impressions accumulated. Their own discussions and memories intensified them. It is not strange that once, coming in from a night of fishing, they believed they saw in the twilight of early morning, standing on the shore, the same figure which they had seen a few years before when the words were spoken, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." We do not need to consider the question of the reality or the unreality of these experiences. The great truth is that a NEW HOPE grew up in the hearts of the disciples. There was a new consciousness, the realization that the influence of Jesus was not gone. They saw in a new light the meaning of his teaching. *And again these men left their nets to "become fishers of men."* There was a new reality for them in this call.

We have seen in Lesson III that the disciples had a different idea from Jesus as to the meaning of "The Kingdom of Heaven." Now they began to see it as Jesus had seen it. They began to see, as they had not seen before, that it was not a political king-

dom that Jesus sought to establish; that he really had established a kingdom, a spiritual kingdom; that that kingdom would go on though Jesus had died; that by killing him the priests had not stopped his work.

So the disciples began to do this work as if Jesus were working with them. They tried to do what Jesus would want them to do. As they meditated on his appearance, his sayings, his ways, his voice, they came to have a definite feeling of his presence with them. Many stories were soon told that he had actually appeared in bodily form to some of his friends. These stories were believed literally by many people; indeed, they are to-day.

A great many years went by before these books, the gospels, were written. During these years the disciples worked hard and preached much to accomplish the work which they believed Jesus wanted done. A great many stories grew up concerning Jesus, some of them from the memories of those who knew him, some of them from the imaginations of people who had not seen him. Thousands of people had come to love the beautiful ideal in his life and some of these stories were the expression of their admiration for this ideal.

When the gospels were written the authors selected from these stories what they wanted in order to tell the story of the Master. A good many stories, which we cannot believe exactly as written, are still of great value as an expression of the profound impression that the character of Jesus made upon the imagination of that age.

Our lesson to-day includes some of these stories of friends of Jesus who believed that they saw Jesus after death. But there were a great many people who had not had such a vision, but who were just as devoted to the work of Jesus as those that had. The key-note of this lesson is in John 20: 29, "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*" This was addressed to people who were willing to work for the Kingdom of Heaven because they had had a vision of Jesus; it shows how fine is the work of people who, not having a vision like that, are able to devote themselves to a pure ideal. And people to-day are working for the Kingdom of Heaven as devotedly as people in any age have done.

Now turn to the Bibles and read some of these stories.

I. Read Mark 16: 1–8. The two oldest Greek manuscripts of Mark's gospel end here, not adding the other stories in this chapter.

II. John 20: 19–31.

VI. The Great Commission.

THIS lesson is approached from the same point of view as the previous lesson. We are still dealing with the time when the disciples had their courage restored and their hope renewed after the death of Jesus. A great work was to be done, and this company of discouraged men became courageous and determined, and in the name of Jesus took up this work. They endured great hardship, they performed immense labor, they met martyrdom, but they succeeded in the great task.

This shows a totally new spirit in the disciples in the weeks that followed the death of Jesus. The narrow idea of a political kingdom gave way to the great thought of a spiritual kingdom. Instead of thinking Jesus was to reign as a king over the people of his own race, they realized that he was to be a teacher of the nations of the earth. And if their master becomes this it will be only through their labors. To this task they consecrated themselves. He is to furnish laws to men; not as a political authority over them, but as a teacher of the spiritual life. Some of the apostles declared themselves to be "ambassadors for Christ." Jesus had taught men to live in the same spirit in which he lived; they must live and work in the same spirit if his influence is to reach to all peoples.

So they are the messengers of this gospel. They are the apostles of this great teacher. They have seen him and been with him. And they will proclaim him far and wide. How this idea came into the minds of the disciples that Jesus was to be a teacher to all nations we cannot with certainty tell. The command, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," is found in one of the stories of Jesus appearing to his disciples after his death. Some people who reject the stories of these appearances do not believe that Jesus ever spoke these words. But there is a strong probability that Jesus did speak these words before his death. In the state of mind of the disciples when "the New Hope" had come to them, these words took on a new meaning.

Whenever it was that this command was given, the idea took possession of the minds of the disciples of Jesus, and they be-

lieved they were doing his will in carrying it out. Read Matthew 28. These men had a sense of the companionship of Jesus on the familiar highways of Palestine; that this sense of companionship was not limited to a locality is expressed in the last verse, "and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Read Mark 16: 14–20 for another version of "the Great Commission."

Notice the difference between this broad commission, as recorded in both Matthew and Mark, and the restricted command when the disciples were first sent out to preach. Matthew 10: 5, 6. Then they were to preach to Jews only.

But though Jesus was of the Jewish race he did not think of the Kingdom of Heaven as being restricted to that race, but it included those "bringing forth the fruit thereof." Matthew 21: 41–43.

DIVISION II

THE COMMUNITY IN JERUSALEM

7. The Promise of Power.
8. Choosing a New Apostle.
9. The Day of Pentecost.
10. At the Beautiful Gate.
11. The Beginning of Persecution.
12. The Story of Ananias and Sapphira.
13. Released from Prison by an Angel.
14. Stephen Chosen a Deacon.
15. The Stoning of Stephen.

VII. The Promise of Power.

WE have seen how the disciples, disheartened by the death of Jesus, began to realize that the work of Jesus could go on, and ought to go on. They gathered courage and hope. They realized that the companionship of Jesus had been a great privilege, and that they had the responsibility of carrying the teachings of Jesus to the nations. They gathered again in Jerusalem. Their hearts were strengthened by companionship.

Before undertaking any definite work there for the spread of the teachings of Jesus, or making another such preaching tour as they had already made, they needed to be "sure of themselves." They had gone at the bidding of Jesus before, and had done as he had planned. They had to develop leadership among themselves, and to acquire confidence. When this time would come there would be power to do the work:

> So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, "Thou must,"
> The youth replies, "I can!"

They needed, in view of the great task that they were to undertake, to get to the state of mind when they could say "I can."

So our lesson to-day is "The Promise of Power." It is hard for us to realize the state of mind of these men, or to understand the forces at work in their lives. But they did get the confidence and power that were needed. From being so afraid at the time of the death of Jesus that "they all forsook him and fled," the time came that other men were amazed at their courage.

Whether it was by recalling advice which Jesus gave them before his death, or by seeing that their confidence grew week by week as they were together, or by one of their number dreaming a dream or seeing a vision, we do not know; but they were certain that they were doing the will of Jesus in waiting in Jerusalem. And this conviction took shape in stories of a special command of Jesus. Read Luke 24: 44–49. Acts 1: 1–9.

It is of interest to inquire if there is a reason for finding this story in Luke and in Acts. And that question may well be con-

sidered here. Turn to the beginning of Luke and read the first four verses. Then read again the first two verses of Acts. What name do you find in both of these passages? From these passages what conclusion can you draw with regard to the authorship of Luke and Acts? You will see, too, that Acts takes up the story of the disciples where the gospels end.

VIII. Choosing a New Apostle.

WE have seen in our previous lessons how the men who had been disciples of Jesus, and who became his apostles, were prepared for their work. The last three lessons especially have shown how their courage grew, and how they came to see that they were to do a great work. This lesson shows further preparation for the work that was to be done, — the choice of a new worker. But why was another apostle chosen? Because there was one lacking in the company that was now gathered in Jerusalem. One of the men who had gone out preaching, when the twelve were sent out, is not with the eleven now. That was Judas.

This lesson is in two parts, — (I) the career of Judas and (II) casting lots for his successor.

(I) Judas was one of the twelve men chosen from the disciples early in the ministry of Jesus; his name is in the lists: Matthew 10:4. Mark 3:19. Luke 6:16.

Judas was the treasurer of the company: John 13:29.

He showed a mercenary spirit: John 12:4–6.

The idea of betraying Jesus entered his heart: John 13:2.

Judas went to the enemies of Jesus and offered to betray Jesus into their hands; and a bargain was made: Matthew 26:14, 15. Mark 14:10, 11. Luke 22:3–6.

Jesus knew that he would be betrayed by Judas, but did not accuse him to the other disciples: Matthew 26:25. John 13:26.

Judas led the band to the garden where Jesus was: Matthew 26:47–50. Mark 14:43–46. Luke 22:47, 48. John 18:2–6.

When Judas saw Jesus led away to crucifixion next day he repented and brought back the money: Matthew 27:3–5.

The priests made use of the money: Matthew 27:6–9.

Then Judas went out and hanged himself in remorse, as is told in a verse already referred to: Matthew 27:5.

Observe in Matthew 27:7 the phrase "the potter's field to bury strangers in." Most of you have, of course, seen "clay pits" near brick yards where the clay has been dug out to make bricks, or coarse pottery. These places are unsightly; and the land, after the clay is taken out, is about as worthless as any

land can be. Such was the "potter's field." The priests took the money that Judas flung at their feet and bought such a field as a place to bury the friendless, about whom nobody cared. The phrase "the potter's field" is sometimes used even to-day; you will read of some poor unfortunate person who has been "buried in the potter's field." It means the place provided for the friendless.

(II) Now study the method of filling the place of Judas. Turn to the first chapter of Acts. After the story of the ascension of Jesus, it is said of the apostles that they "then returned unto Jerusalem" (verse 12). This was not far. Olivet is a ridge east of Jerusalem. The temple was on Mt. Moriah, in Jerusalem. The valley of Kidron is between Mt. Moriah and Olivet. The distance is less than a mile. "A sabbath day's journey" was the distance (about 2000 yards) that a Jew was permitted by his law to travel on the Sabbath.

Verses 13 and 14 give a list of the company that came together. The name of Judas is, of course, lacking.

Then the remainder of the chapter tells the story of the choice of the successor of Judas. Peter stands up and speaks of Judas, at a time when a large company was gathered together. How many? Verse 16 speaks of words of "David, concerning Judas." Of course anything David said did not really refer to Judas. And in verse 20 the quotations from the book of Psalms do not refer to Judas. They are, indeed, apt quotations; but we must not suppose that their authors had Judas in mind.

Verses 21 to 26 tell the story of the casting of lots for a new apostle. Notice particularly that he is to be chosen from the disciples, verse 21. And he is to be "a witness of the resurrection," verse 22. A great deal of the preaching of the apostles was testifying to their belief in the resurrection.

What two men were nominated?

Did the apostles believe that the will of God was manifested in the result of casting lots?

Who was chosen?

Recall the difference between a disciple and an apostle (Lesson II). There were a great many disciples who were not apostles. This new apostle had been a disciple from the beginning of the ministry of Jesus.

IX. The Day of Pentecost.

LET us first see when this day was. Good Friday is the day that is observed in memory of the death of Jesus. Easter Sunday is the day on which, according to the traditions, the resurrection took place. "Pentecost" comes in June. The name is Greek, but it is an ancient Hebrew festival and had, of course, a different name in early times. It is the feast of Harvest; harvest comes earlier in Palestine than in more northerly latitudes.

When Jerusalem became the religious capital of the Hebrew people, in the time of their early kings, it became the custom for people to gather from all parts of their country, in Jerusalem, for a few great festivals every year. One of these festivals was the passover: it was at that time that Jesus was crucified. He ate the passover with the disciples on Thursday night and was crucified Friday morning. Pentecost was another such festival. Thousands of Jews, from many lands, were gathered in Jerusalem. Religious fervor was intense.

We have seen in earlier lessons that the minds of the apostles were getting ready for a great undertaking. After the passover and the death of Jesus, they had been scattered; but they soon gathered in Jerusalem. Their courage had been strengthened by companionship, and their understanding of the martyrdom of Jesus became more clear as they talked together. They grew in the consciousness of having a great work to do; and a splendid determination began to fill their minds. Then the stories of the resurrection that began to be told had a deep influence on their thoughts.

Now the day of pentecost comes. The time is opportune for a great spiritual event. The conditions are just right. The apostles are together: one thought possesses them and they hope and pray for power to speak to the nations. A wonderful thing happens. Read Acts 2: 1–4. There it is described. The results, we shall see presently, were large. The work of these apostles, in proclaiming Jesus, began with great vigor and courage. After such an experience these men were ready to do anything for their religion.

Read Acts 2: 5–13. Without going outside of Jerusalem the apostles had the opportunity to preach to men of many nations. Read again verse 5. "Dwelling" does not mean that these men were permanent residents; they were pilgrims who had come for the festival. Of course, when men came so far they often made a prolonged stay. "Devout men": they were earnest in their religion.

In the first years of the Christian church, the times that these lessons deal with, there is reference more than once to this strange thing which is called "speaking with tongues." In modern times people have been known to go into a trance and speak readily in a language different from their ordinary speech. Something like that happened in those times of intense religious feeling. We cannot know just what happened on the day of pentecost. The story seems to say that these apostles spoke in their ordinary speech, but that the men of these nations heard them in the language of all these nations. See verse 11.

But the crowd knew that something strange had happened. They were feeling intensely about religion anyway, and a great company quickly collected. In verse 13 what explanation did some frivolous persons make? This is answered by Peter, it is only nine o'clock in the morning, "the third hour," and devout Jews did not, on feast days, drink wine or eat before that hour. Notice that the apostles are observing the Jewish feast, just as Jesus observed the passover the night before his death.

Then Peter goes on with a serious address. See how bold he is! He is the one who in the presence of a servant girl had been afraid to confess that he was a disciple of Jesus! (John 18: 17.) How changed these men were!

Peter makes a beautiful quotation from the little book of the prophet Joel. It speaks of how the spirit of God will come to many people, not simply to a chosen few. Young and old, men and women, not simply the priests or those specially endowed, but the common people shall have the experience of religion in abundant measure. Read the quotation. Now turn to the book of Joel and read 2: 28–32. Joel lived three hundred years before Christ.

Now in Acts 2 read verses 22–24 and verse 36. For the present pass over the remainder of Peter's speech. His argument, in brief, is this: Jesus was a chosen prophet of God, but the

Jews rejected him and put him to death; but God has given to this rejected prophet the manifestation of the resurrection.

Verse 37. This touched the consciences of some of the Jews: what question did they ask? It is quite possible that there were men in this crowd who had been in the passover crowd that had howled for the crucifixion of Jesus.

What was the answer of Peter to their question? Read verses 38 and 39.

Have we the entire address of Peter? Read verse 40.

Now observe the large results of that day's events. Read verses 41 and 42.

X. At the Beautiful Gate.

READ Acts 2:43–47. Following the day of pentecost, the company of those who believed in Jesus grew steadily. The name "Christians" was not yet thought of, and was not for several years. Nor was this company of people called a "church." But something very interesting happened. These people formed a "community" in Jerusalem. Jesus and his twelve companions had been like brothers. They had only one purse. You remember that it was Judas who was so trusted that he was appointed to carry the "bag." When the disciples, after the death of Jesus, gathered again in Jerusalem they lived like one family. And, as the company of people grew on the day of pentecost and after, they tried to extend this same manner of life to take in all the people who joined the company. When any man came he sold his property and put it into the common treasury. From this treasury the cost of living for the company was paid. It was possible to do this as long as there were many people joining the company, for it made an income. But we will see, as our lessons continue, the troubles that came of this.

But in those first months they were a happy people! Verses 46 and 47 speak vividly of this joyous state of mind. And with the great successes, how confident the apostles became! They were prepared to undertake almost anything. And the people came to believe that they could do almost anything. And because the people did believe that wonders could be done, strange things did happen. Read verse 43.

The principal part of our lesson to-day is the story of such an event. In Palestine at that time there were many people in poverty and distress. The country was oppressed by the Roman power. There was much anxiety and stress. Many people had lost all hope for the future; indeed, there were dark times ahead for these Jewish people. But the stress and anxiety made nervous diseases very prevalent. Many people were beggars, having lost all hope and ambition. You will remember that Jesus helped a great many people who were nervously distressed.

There was a beggar who was carried up to the temple every

day by his friends. They laid him at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, probably the east gate. There he was seen daily; doubtless he found it a profitable location for begging, for people are often more generous when they are touched by religion. Some one said that he had been lame from his birth. One day at "the ninth hour," three o'clock in the afternoon, Peter and John were going up to the temple for the vesper service, "the evening sacrifice." The beggar asked them for alms. Then a dramatic scene occurred. Read Acts 3: 4–10.

Now go through these verses again, but looking more at the details. Verse 4, — "Look on us": close attention is a preliminary condition to the production of some unusual mental conditions; it is used by many people to-day who relieve nervous distress. Verse 6, — was the help that Peter gave better than the silver or gold that the man had desired? Even to take a hopeless, ambitionless beggar and waken in him the joy of living, and the desire to help himself, is a divine work. Peter had given the man a precious gift. The gift of life is the supreme gift. Verse 7 says "received strength": there are many lives that lack power, though power is available. Recall the poem:

> "Earth gets its price for what earth gives us
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 'T is heaven alone that is given away,
> 'T is only God may be had for the asking."

But the people, seeing that something unusual has happened, crowd together. Peter is not slow to seize the opportunity. He preaches to the people. Again it is Jesus and the resurrection; again he accuses them of killing Jesus. Verse 14 refers to an incident at the trial of Jesus before Pilate. Read John 18: 38–40. Some of the same men who howled for the crucifixion of Jesus may have been in this company listening to Peter. In verse 16 Peter ascribes the healing of this man to the power of Jesus. In verse 19 he exhorts the crowd to repent of their sins.

But the sermon is interrupted by the temple guard arresting Peter and John and locking them up for the night. The authorities of the temple had a strong military guard that did police duty. Indeed, there was often a great deal for them to do! Fanatics often raised riots. Peter and John had gone up

there to attend the vesper service. Did they attend it? Or did anybody else! Here were Peter and John in one of the porches of the temple gathering the congregation around themselves! No wonder the priests called the guard and had this meeting broken up.

But there were many who felt that a new light had come to them in the fragment of a sermon that they had heard before these men were dragged away to a dungeon. And enough were added to the company of believers in Jesus to bring the estimate of their numbers up to five thousand. How rapidly the company grew!

XI. The Beginning of Persecution.

Fix in your thoughts this significant sentence:

Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

The lesson passage is Acts 4: 1–31. This lesson continues the story of the last lesson. Recall the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. Peter and John had interrupted the service at the temple and had preached, standing right in one of the temple porches. Read again Acts 4: 1–4. This tells the event with which our last lesson closed, the arrest of Peter and John. The first verse tells of three classes of men who objected to the preaching of these men: the priests, the temple guard, and the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection at all, and they did not want the idea preached.

But next day Peter and John were brought up for trial. Read verses 5, 6 and 7. Notice the names Annas and Caiphas. Now turn to John 18: 12–14. Observe the same names. So the same men who had condemned Jesus and had insisted that Pilate the Roman governor should have him crucified, are the judges at this trial of Peter and John! They ask by what authority these men have done what they have done. Read verses 8 to 12. The answer of Peter is brief and direct. His answer is that the word of Jesus is sufficient authority for what they had done.

This answer was very surprising: see verses 11, 12 and 13. These priests had brought about the death of Jesus because they objected to his teaching. Now they are confronted by the fact that a number of men are boldly teaching the gospel of Jesus, and declaring that Jesus had risen after these men put him to death. But this court, before which Peter and John are on trial, is not a Roman law court, but a Jewish church court.

The prisoners are taken outside so that there may be a dis-

cussion of what to do. The prisoners are accused of helping a man; and the man has been standing with them, as evidence that he was helped. There is nothing for which they ought to be punished. But it is decided that they shall be threatened, in order that they may fear to proclaim Jesus. Read verses 14 to 22 and see the result. Notice particularly verses 20 and 21.

Had these men learned boldness from Jesus? Read Matthew 10:26–28. Matthew 21:23. Matthew 21:27. And judge if Jesus gave an example of boldness in Matthew 23.

Acts 4:20 is a splendid statement of the compelling power of a conviction.

Read verses 23 to 31. Notice especially verse 29: these men are praying for boldness of speech. And verse 31 says that as a result of that prayer "they spake the word of God with boldness." And this verse shows the power of the ideas of a compact and intense company of people. From this whole lesson we can get an inside view of how the early church grew. There was intense feeling. Convictions were strong, men were devoted. Men gave themselves with complete surrender to the new faith.

XII. The Story of Ananias and Sapphira.

OUR lesson to-day contains a story, the essential point of which depends on the communism of the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem. The lesson is, therefore, in two parts: first the communism; and second, the story.

Read Acts 4:32–35, and then turn back to Acts 2:43–47. Read, also, the first paragraph of the notes on Lesson X. There communism was mentioned incidentally; here in this lesson the whole story is based upon it. This communism involved a manner of life distinctly different from the prevailing manner of life of the people among whom these people lived; and also a different view with regard to the ownership of property from the one that was commonly held then. These people had one great system of housekeeping; they had a common table like a great family. When any man joined this community he was encouraged — but not required — to share all his possessions with the whole community, and to be as poor or as rich as the others.

This may seem difficult to understand; but we use the idea of mutual ownership in modern society. Who owns our streets? Our parks? Not one person, but the whole of the people of the town or city. They are held in common, and maintained at public expense and for public use: that is, a great many people pay for them and use them. Indeed, we often hear, when someone is discussing public questions, the expression "This is a matter that concerns the whole community." This use of the word "community" is familiar to all of us.

But these people in Jerusalem maintained a community for the purpose of providing the ordinary necessities of life; "not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." And it was considered just the right thing to do, for a man who joined the community to sell his property and contribute the money to the community treasury. A notable example was set by a man named Joseph. Read Acts 4:36, 37. What additional name was given him? By whom? What does the name mean? From what Hebrew tribe was he descended? On what island was he

born? Where is that island? What property had he owned? What did he do with the property? What did he do with the money? (These two verses are exceedingly condensed. But a great deal of the Bible is written in this condensed style. In reading it is necessary to be alert and to think!)

When this man Joseph had done this he was praised so much that a man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira decided that they would get the same kind of praise, and attract a great deal of attention. They certainly got attention! And their names will never be forgotten. But it is not an enviable reputation. If you hear it said of a man "He is an Ananias" what does it mean? Or if it is said of a woman "She is a Sapphira" what does it tell of her character?

Now read carefully the story, the first eleven verses of the fifth chapter of Acts. These people owned a piece of property and they sold it. Then they agreed to keep a part of the price, but to take the other part and publicly give it to the community just as if that were the whole price. Read verse 4 again. They did not have to sell the property. Having sold it they did not have to give the money to the community. When they brought some of the money they did not have to bring all. But they should have told the truth. Read verse 8. Peter asked the woman directly if this amount that was brought was the amount for which the property was sold. And she lied directly.

In some way Peter found out, before Ananias appeared, the lie that was intended by these people. We can hardly think it incredible that Ananias, coming with this falsehood in his heart, and suddenly confronted with the knowledge that his iniquity was known, and as suddenly accused of lying to the Holy Ghost, should drop dead. And the coincidence of Sapphira doing the same thing is not, by any means, beyond belief. She expected to find her husband highly honored; she comes to the place expecting to be received with great enthusiasm; the news that her husband is dead and buried is not broken gently to her; the shock was easily enough to cause her to fall dead.

Among truthful people they had been untruthful; among people who acted honorably they were dishonorable. They expected praise, the gratification of their pride; and their names will be associated with falsehood for all time.

XIII. Released from Prison by an Angel.

Our lesson to-day is a story of the apostles getting into trouble again with the authorities of the Jewish church. The common people sympathized with this new religion and the men who were promoting it. But the authorities of the church, and especially the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus or of anybody else, were determined to obstruct the progress of this new religion. They brought about the arrest of the apostles and had them put into the public prison. Next morning, with great pomp and formality, the church court was assembled to put them on trial. The high priest himself was there. And when all was ready he gave orders to have the prisoners brought. The officers went to the prison to bring them. Here were the guards standing outside in their places, all in their uniforms, like soldiers. They look very formidable with their polished weapons gleaming in the morning sun! With much solemnity, and the harsh creaking of heavy metal, the doors are unlocked and the bars are taken down. Then the cells are opened that the prisoners may be dragged out. Then there are confusion, consternation, sharp questions, the quick searching of every corner of the great prison; for the prisoners are gone!

After a great deal of undignified scurrying here and there the officers march back to the court and tell the state of the case. And there is great consternation in the court. All this formality and dignity, and no prisoners! And the stress of the situation becomes laughable when a man comes running in and, much out of breath, announces that the men who escaped from prison were conducting an early morning service in the temple, and had been preaching there since daybreak!

How had they escaped? Somebody said it must have been an angel that let them out of the prison. And the prison guard did not deny this, for they hated to admit that men could have opened the prison and helped the prisoners escape and the guard know nothing about it!

But when the high priest heard that the apostles were in the

temple he sent the officers for them. The officers went to the temple and were exceedingly careful not to use any violence, fearing that the crowd would stone them. But the apostles went with the officers willingly, and offered no resistance. So they were put on trial. How the trial proceeded we shall see.

The lesson passage is Acts 5: 12–42. Read it carefully, using the following notes.

(1) Verses 12–16. *Popular enthusiasm for the apostles.*

What was Solomon's porch?

What is meant by "The people magnified them"?

What was the superstition about Peter's shadow?

Did people come considerable distances to be healed?

What modern stories of cures have you heard of that resemble this story?

(2) Verses 17–18. *Imprisonment.*

Who were put in prison?

By whom were they put in prison?

What feeling did they have toward the apostles?

(3) Verses 19–25. *Released.*

According to the story, how did these men get out of prison?

What were they commanded to do?

And what did they do?

What time of day was it?

(4) Verses 26–32. *The trial.*

Where were the apostles arrested?

Read Acts 4: 17–20 and Acts 5: 28, 29, and compare them.

What reply was made?

What effect did the reply have? See verse 33. Remember that this was the council that tried Jesus and sent him for a further trial before Pilate.

(5) Verses 34–39. *The advice of Gamaliel.*

The apostles were taken outside the room while the council discussed the case. Gamaliel, a wise and keen man, made a speech. His argument was practically this: "Do not do anything against these men. For if this religion is false it will die anyway, and if it is true you cannot kill it."

(6) Verses 40–42. *The result.*

What did the council think of this argument?

Instead of killing the apostles what did they do to them?

And what did they forbid the apostles to do?

How did the apostles feel about what had happened to them?
Why?
Did they obey the command of the council?
Why was it right for them to disobey this command?
Whose command did they believe they were obeying?

XIV. Stephen Chosen a Deacon.

AGAIN let us call to mind the picture of the life of the community in Jerusalem; the company living as one great family. The lesson to-day will tell us of family troubles. There were, in the community, people of different nations. And there were misunderstandings because of these racial differences. The difficulties of managing the living of so large a company of people must have been very great. To satisfy everybody would be well-nigh impossible. There were, in the community, Jews who had always lived in Palestine. And there were Jews of other nations, men of Jewish ancestry but of foreign birth. You remember the man, Joseph, from the island of Cyprus, who sold a field and gave the money to the community, thereby setting an example that Ananias pretended to follow.

There were, of course, men of mixed race in this company. There were Jewish men who had married Greek women, and whose children grew up with an attachment to both races; and "Grecian Jews" were present in this community. Trouble developed between the Jews of unmixed race and the "Grecian Jews." This trouble became so serious as to lead to a radical change of the plan of managing the community. "There arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." The "daily ministration" was the serving at the communistic table and the distribution of what was held in common. Evidently Greeks found it hard to get the attention of the waiters! The men may have been able to get what was needed for themselves and their wives; but the widows had a hard time of it, and did not get enough to eat!

It was evident that with the increase of the care, with the growth of the number of disciples, there was neglect of some things. The twelve apostles were busy with the spiritual work: should they turn their attention from that to the care of the tables and the serving of food? No, that would not do, so they decided that they must choose seven men who should have charge of the business affairs. Stephen and six others were chosen, and they were consecrated to this special work. It is interesting to see that

Stephen did not confine his work to the care of this business, but that he was also a very energetic preacher. Indeed, the men who opposed the new religion soon began to plan to silence him by taking his life.

Now read carefully the lesson passage, Acts 6.

(1) Verse 1. The dispute.

(2) Verses 2–4. The remedy proposed.

(3) Verses 5, 6. The remedy adopted.

(4) Verse 7. The continued growth of the company of disciples.

(5) Verses 8–10. The preaching of Stephen.

(6) Verses 11–15. Stephen is put upon trial by the council of the Jewish church.

The result we shall learn in our next lesson.

XV. The Stoning of Stephen.

WE are coming now to a great turning point in the story of this new religion. A great persecution begins. The community in Jerusalem was broken up. The whole course of events runs in new channels.

Recall that we learned in our last lesson that seven men were chosen to have charge of the business affairs of the community in Jerusalem. The names of two of them we have cause to remember, Stephen and Philip. We learned that Stephen became a vigorous preacher; we shall learn that Philip also preached. Stephen became so prominent in promoting the new religion that the Jewish council had him arrested and put on trial. Of what was he accused? This is very important: he was accused of preaching against the temple in Jerusalem. When the high priest asked him if this was true he proceeded, then and there, to preach a sermon of the very kind that he was accused of preaching! Instead of denying or admitting the charge he actually repeated the offense in their presence!

The sermon is found beginning in the second verse of the seventh chapter of Acts. To men familiar with Hebrew ideas it was full of significance. But to us who are not familiar with Hebrew ways of thinking it is not so clear. But it can be summed up clearly: Stephen had been preaching that the temple in Jerusalem was not necessary for the worship of God. He was being tried by men who held that only in this temple could men worship God in a way that God was satisfied with. Stephen in this sermon argues that men had found God without the temple. And if men had found God without the temple, this new religion could be a genuine religion and disregard the temple worship.

Read Acts 7: 48–50. These are the concluding words of his argument, that God does not dwell in temples made with hands.

But then read the conclusion that he draws from his argument; he turns on his accusers and accuses them of being murderers, for the killing of Jesus. Read verses 51–53.

What was the conclusion of the trial? All dignity and order were thrown aside; the officers were so infuriated that they waited for no formalities. They took Stephen out and stoned

him to death. Read verses 54–60. Verses 54 and 57 indicate their extreme rage. Verses 55 and 56 tell us that Stephen saw a vision and spoke of it to those about him. In verse 58 "witnesses" does not mean those who witnessed this stoning, but the witnesses at the trial, — see Acts 6: 13. According to ancient Hebrew custom, when a man was stoned, the witnesses who secured his condemnation cast the first stones. Compare Acts 7: 59, 60 and Luke 23: 34, 46.

This was the beginning of a great persecution of the disciples. This story also introduces to us a man who is to be of the greatest importance in the further development of this new religion. In Acts 7: 58 we read "and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." They are about to stone Stephen, and Saul stands guard over their coats. And again, in the first verse of chapter 8 we read "And Saul was consenting unto his death." This man Saul joins in a great persecution of the disciples; afterward he becomes the greatest preacher of this new religion.

When the authorities of the Jewish church wanted the death of Jesus they went to the Roman governor and secured it. Read John 18: 31. We have seen in our previous lessons that they wanted to stop the preaching of the apostles, but they did not kill them. They threatened or flogged them. How, then, is it that Stephen was promptly put to death by this same council? Pilate was the Roman governor at the time of the death of Jesus, and he was a careful and strict governor. It is probable that at this time he had been removed, and Marcellus was temporary governor. Law and order were not so strictly maintained. It was the opportunity for a persecution of the new religion.

But this became a time of great growth for the new religion. Read Acts 8: 4. A strong church had been growing in Jerusalem. Now it is scattered by persecution, and the people, fleeing in all directions, preach the new religion wherever they go.

Read Acts 8: 4–8. This man, Philip, is one who, with Stephen, was chosen a deacon. Realize that this man is not going to Jews, but to Samaritans. He is beginning the work of preaching the gospel to all nations. How strange it seems that persecution brought about the very thing that Jesus had desired: that his gospel should be carried far and wide among men of every race and color and language.

DIVISION III

SCATTERED BY PERSECUTION

16. The Story of Simon the Sorcerer.
17. Philip and the Ethiopian Officer.
18. Paul Begins his Ministry.
19. Paul Preaches in Jerusalem.
20. Cornelius and Peter.
21. Herod's Persecution of the Church.

XVI. The Story of Simon the Sorcerer.

SUPPOSE that some men are in a woods. The woods is dense; the ground is covered with dry leaves and twigs and branches. All this is fuel that kindles quickly. These men have a small fire, and they want to put it out. Imagine that one of them places a charge of gunpowder in the middle of the fire and it explodes. Will it put the fire out? Far from it: it will scatter the brands and the coals in all directions. The leaves will kindle, tongues of flame will lick the twigs and sticks; and there will be many fires instead of one.

That was just what happened in Christianity at this time. The persecution in Jerusalem scattered the people of the church there, and they went everywhere preaching the gospel. The persecution made the new religion more widely known. Christianity ceased to be a community, like one great family, in Jerusalem. Men in all the towns and cities round about needed the new religion as much as the men in Jerusalem did. They were like fuel that kindled easily when the flame touched them. And Christianity entered on a new era, — an era in which churches of the new religion were organized far and wide.

Our lesson for to-day is a part of the eighth chapter of Acts. It begins where the lesson of last Sunday left off. Read again in this chapter verses 4 to 8. Here were remarkable things happening in Samaria. But who were the Samaritans? In Palestine there were three provinces, Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Look at the map and see how they were located. The Jews lived in Galilee and Judea. Samaria was between the two and was inhabited by a people of mixed races, and having a religion which the Jews despised. There was much hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," was the way a Samaritan woman spoke to Jesus of this old animosity. Philip was a deacon of the church in Jerusalem. But he was a Greek, and so was more willing to go to the Samaritans than a Jew would have been. He had been chosen a deacon in the church at Jerusalem in order to help preserve peace between the Jewish and the Greek elements in the church.

Now a man named Simon appears on the scene. He is a magician. The word used here is "sorcerer." We are familiar with magicians in our own times; but everybody knows that the wonderful things they do are only tricks. In that age people were more easily deceived, and many people thought that this man had supernatural power. It was an age of much superstition. Now read verses 9 to 13. This man, Simon, goes with others, listens to the story of Jesus, and to the lessons of his teachings. He believes what he hears, and, with others, is baptized as a sign of accepting the new faith.

Now read verses 14 to 24. All of the apostles have not left Jerusalem, but they are taking great chances in staying there during this persecution. However, word comes to the apostles in Jerusalem that even the Samaritans have accepted the gospel. And Peter and John go down there. And when they preach, and pray, and lay their hands on the people, the same wonderful thing happens to Samaritans that happened to some Jews in Jerusalem, and which they called "receiving the Holy Ghost."

But Simon thinks this is some new kind of magic. He wants to buy the secret. He goes to Peter and John and quietly offers them money to tell him how the thing is done! Read again verse 21, — Peter is denouncing him, and states in a few words just what is wrong with Simon. Simon's heart is wrong; he wants to gain a selfish advantage. He quite fails to understand the religion of Jesus, which is unselfish. The condemnation was deserved, just as the condemnation of Ananias by Peter was deserved. Simon did not drop dead. But he was humbled, and asked them to pray for forgiveness for him; he was truly repentant.

XVII. Philip and the Ethiopian Officer.

I. PRELIMINARY questions. Who was Philip? Where is the first mention that is made of him? To what work was he consecrated? How many men were chosen at that time for that work? Name the other most notable man in the group. What happened to him? After that event what did Philip do? In the last lesson what man did Philip meet? And what two apostles from Jerusalem went there?

II. Now turn to the lesson passage for to-day. It is Acts 8: 26–40. Read the story, using these notes.

Verse 26. "An angel of the Lord spake unto Philip": the author of Luke and Acts was very fond of believing that angels took an active part in the affairs of men. "Go toward the south": Philip was in Samaria. Look on the map and find Gaza, and see what direction a road from Jerusalem to Gaza would lie. And, to get to that road, what direction would Philip go from Samaria? "The same is desert": put in "now"; and read "the same is now deserted" or disused. There was an interval between this event and the writing of the story. In this interval the road fell into disuse.

Verse 27. Whom did Philip encounter? An Ethiopian (or rather Abyssinian) officer, the queen's treasurer. Where had he been and for what purpose? This shows that he had adopted the Jewish religion.

Verse 28. What book was he reading?

Verses 29–31. "Join thyself": this officer would be traveling with a considerable company of followers. Philip is to mingle with the retinue of the officer. Was the officer reading aloud? What question and answer passed between Philip and the officer; and what request was made?

Verses 32–33. Can you find the place in the Bible where the officer was reading? It is in Isaiah 53. This is thought, by many people, to be like a description of Jesus; but it is not necessary for us to think that the writer of the chapter in Isaiah had any thought of Jesus. But Philip was able to make a good comparison between the account in Isaiah and the experiences

of Jesus. The officer thought that the writer of the chapter might have been speaking of himself.

Verses 34–40. Of what did Philip preach? What happened when they came to water? Where is verse 37 in the Revised Version? Where are Azotus and Cæsarea? Trace Philip's journey along the Mediterranean coast.

XVIII. Paul Begins his Ministry.

Acts 9: 1–22. *Observe that Paul is called Saul here.*

THIS story falls into three parts: — (a) The journey toward Damascus; (b) Saul in Damascus; (c) Saul preaching the gospel of Jesus.

Where have we heard of Saul before? Remember that when Stephen was taken out to be stoned the men who had been witnesses at the trial cast the first stones, and they laid down their coats "at the feet of a young man named Saul." Then we learned that the killing of Stephen was just the beginning of a great persecution; and that Saul was very active in it. Turn to Acts 8: 1–3. Read those verses, then read Acts 9: 1, 2. Find Damascus on the map. The letters are to the officers of Jewish synagogues in Damascus. The persecution is to be carried far.

There is, in verse 2, an expression that is very important. How are the people who believe in Jesus designated? "Any that were of the Way," is the expression. As yet there was really no church, no creed, or any such thing among the followers of Jesus. *Christianity was a way of living.* The disciples were not yet even called "Christians," nor was the new religion called "Christianity." In Acts 5: 20 we have also a striking expression: "Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this Life." The new religion is a *Life.* Later in our lessons we shall find just where it was that the name "Christian" was used for the first time.

(*a*) Now read about the journey, — verses 3–9. Read these verses carefully. Saul went from Jerusalem to Damascus; he started from Jerusalem full of hatred of the name of Jesus and of his followers. When he reached Damascus he was a greatly changed man; we shall find that he sought out the disciples of Jesus as a friend. What had happened? Something very wonderful had happened. New ideas came to Saul like a flood of light. New thoughts came into his mind as vividly as if spoken by a voice. As long as he lived, he believed that he had seen a vision: later when men claimed to speak with special

authority because they had seen Jesus, Paul replied that he too had seen Jesus.

In this story of the vision observe the elements of the story: (1) the light; (2) the voice; (3) the feeling of being called or directed; (4) the desire to obey. In what condition did Saul go into Damascus?

(*b*) At Damascus. Verses 10–18. What disciple was at Damascus? Whom did he think he heard in a vision? How did he answer? What was he directed to do? (verse 11). What objection did Ananias make? What was the answer? Who was to preach to the Gentiles? (verse 15). Did Ananias obey? What was the first word that he used in addressing Saul? Observe: (1) sight restored; (2) baptized; (3) eating.

(*c*) Saul begins to preach. Verses 19–22. With whom did Saul stay in Damascus? To what buildings did he go? What message did he take? Why did this cause surprise? Was Saul successful in the work he tried to do in Damascus? (verse 22).

Now let us think about this man. He became, in the course of time, the greatest power among men in spreading the gospel of Jesus; he became the greatest apostle. Compare the energy with which he persecuted Christianity and the energy with which he promoted it: it was the same energy. He was capable of the greatest enthusiasm, and the deepest devotion. This experience on the way to Damascus turned this great energy into a new channel. We shall find that he took a considerable time in obscurity to think things over before he began his great career as an apostle. But the beginning of his work for the religion of Jesus was done in Damascus.

Saul was perfectly sincere in his work as a persecutor. Read Acts 26:8–23. Read also Acts 22:3–21. If there is time, compare these stories.

XIX. Paul Preaches in Jerusalem.

THE lesson passage is Acts 9: 23–43. This continues Lesson XVIII, our last lesson. Read carefully the following passages: Acts 9: 23–25. II Corinthians 11: 32, 33. Galatians 1: 17–19. Acts 9: 26–31. You will see that an important event, related in Galatians, is not mentioned in Acts. The relation of Paul to the apostles in Jerusalem is an important question. If we take this story in Acts, and consider it, and with it all the other references to the subject in the New Testament, we will find that the events leading up to Paul's association with the work of the Apostles were probably as follows:

(*a*) Paul arrived in Damascus, joined himself to the company of the disciples there, and remained for a time, but how long we do not know. But people in Damascus were greatly puzzled over the wonderful change in Paul: indeed, he was not perfectly clear in his own mind as to the meaning of all that had happened, and he needed time to think things over. What did he do? The book of Acts does not tell us, but Paul's letter to the Galatians does tell us:

(*b*) He went away into Arabia, — away to the south into the wilderness. You remember that when Jesus had been baptized he went into the wilderness for a time before he began to preach. So Paul does now.

(*c*) Then Paul returned to Damascus. We learn this also from Paul's letter to the Galatians. Read Galatians 1: 17, 18. He preached in Damascus, arguing for the gospel of Jesus. But Paul was a man who often got into trouble: he stirred men's anger. So here he got into trouble and had to flee for his life. His preaching had greatly angered the Jews, and a plot against his life was formed. They got the coöperation of the governor and the public officers, and had the gates watched day and night lest he escape. We must realize that the city was surrounded with a great wall, with a few gates in the wall. But the plot became known to Paul, and good friends took a rope and a great basket, and lowered him outside the wall at night. When the basket touched the ground, away ran Paul through the darkness.

(*d*) It was now three years since Paul had gone out to Jerusalem to go to Damascus on his errand of persecution. He returned to Jerusalem, and sought to join himself to the company of the apostles. But he was not received willingly by the apostles and disciples there. They were frankly afraid of him. But Barnabas, a man of influence with the apostles, brought him to them and vouched for him, explaining that this great change had come over him, and that he had been preaching in Damascus.

(*e*) In Jerusalem Paul preached and argued. Remember that he was an intense Jew; and he stirred up the hatred of "the Grecian Jews." Again he was in danger for his life.

(*f*) Friends helped him to escape out of the city. What a firebrand he was, inflaming men's hatred! These friends took him northwestward to the seacoast, to Cæsarea, and from there he went northward to Tarsus. Trace this journey on the map.

(*g*) In Tarsus he probably stayed for some years, doing no active work for Christianity. We shall find later on that Paul was, by trade, a tent-maker. He had gone to Jerusalem as a youth to be a student there. It may be that in Tarsus, during these years of comparative seclusion, he learned the trade of tent-maker.

(*h*) We shall learn later that Barnabas, who had befriended him in Jerusalem, sought him out in Tarsus some years later, and started him doing a special piece of work.

But now read Acts 9:32–43, the remainder of the lesson. This shows the widening opportunity for the new religion.

XX. Cornelius and Peter.

In the first years of the early Christian church, there was danger that Christianity would be only a Jewish sect, limited in its work and influence, and existing in a small area. Jesus was a Jew; the apostles were Jews; the lessons that we have been having are largely of events in Jerusalem, or near Jerusalem. Many of the disciples were devoted to the Jewish customs in religion, and when they accepted this new religion they still felt that they must be loyal to the Jewish religious customs. If the influence of the Jewish religion had been strong enough, Christianity would have been greatly restricted by it. But Christianity gradually broke away from the control of Jewish influences and developed a life of its own. Remember that at this time no part of the New Testament had been written. Christianity had no churches, and very little organization. Indeed, we have seen that there was, as yet, no distinctive name for the new movement; the new religion was called "this Life" or "the Way."

But some of the things that happened, in lessons we have had, showed that Christianity was breaking away from Jewish traditions. You remember the trouble over the serving at the tables in the community, and that some people who were not of pure Jewish race had difficulty in getting the attention of the waiters. And the seven men who were elected to have charge of the business were not all of them Jews. Then the persecutions carried on by the Jewish authorities, even against their own countrymen, were tending to create a wall of misunderstanding between the Jewish authorities and the apostles. And these persecutions had scattered the preachers of the new religion far and wide.

It was Philip, who was not a Jew, who had preached to Samaritans, and to the Ethiopian officer. And this preaching to the Samaritans had led Peter and John to go to Samaria and preach. You remember that the Samaritan woman said to Jesus "Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans"; but Peter and John, who were Jews, were willing, now, to have very

friendly dealings with these Samaritans who had accepted the religion of Jesus.

So we see that in many ways Christianity was breaking away from the Jewish religion. But this question of the relation of the two religions was a very serious one and caused a great deal of discussion and some quarreling among the people of that time; yes, even among the apostles themselves. And our lesson to-day deals directly with one phase of this important question.

The events of the lesson took place in Cæsarea and Joppa. Find these places on the map. You know that the government of the country was in the hands of the Romans. They had garrisons of soldiers in many towns to preserve order. The Jews had to obey Roman law. And they hated it. Now there was a Roman garrison in Cæsarea, and the officer in command — a "centurion" — was Cornelius. He is one of the men in the title of our lesson.

Read Acts 9:31, 32. There you will see that, though the persecution had ceased and the "church had peace," Peter was going about to many places preaching. Now read Acts 9:43. You have already found Joppa on the map.

Read Acts 10:1–8. Cornelius was "one that feared God," but he was not of the Jewish religion.

Read Acts 10:9–16. Peter, too, saw and heard something strange. The story frankly says it was "a trance." According to the Jewish religion certain animals are "clean," and fit to eat; other animals are "unclean" and are not eaten. But in this trance Peter sees "clean" and "unclean" all together and is commanded to eat. When he makes the protest that the Jewish religion forbids him to do so, a voice says "What God hath cleansed make not thou common." This happens three times, so there can be no mistake about it.

This seems like a divine command to disobey the old law of the Jewish religion. Now read Acts 10:17–23. The application of the lesson to Peter becomes clear to him. Peter's prejudices would have made him unwilling to go to this Roman, Cornelius, but because a divine voice has commanded him to disregard the differences of "clean" and "unclean" he is quite sure that God would want him to go to this man of another race as readily as if it were a man of his own race and religion who had sent for him. So he goes.

Read Acts 10: 24–33. Cornelius and Peter have an understanding, and Peter realizes that he is to disregard the differences of race, because God does not regard any man because of his race. Read verses 34 and 35: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but IN EVERY NATION HE THAT FEARETH HIM AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ACCEPTABLE TO HIM." This was a splendid step forward in religious thinking.

Read Acts 10: 44–48. Then to these people who are "Gentiles" — a name used by the Jews to mean all who were not Jews — there came that same strange experience called "the gift of the Holy Ghost." Peter and others, after the day of pentecost, had supposed that only to Jews would God show so great a favor. But now he realizes that in the eyes of God, Jews and Gentiles are alike; they are all equally his children. And Peter says "Can any forbid water that these should not be baptized?" So these Gentiles are baptized.

Thus were these Gentiles received as disciples: (*a*) by the "gift of the Holy Ghost," and (*b*) by the baptism with water as a sign that they were received into fellowship.

But when Peter went up to Jerusalem there was trouble in store for him. The strict Jews among the apostles reproved him severely for dealing with Gentiles as if they were on an equality with Jews. Then Peter told the story of what had happened. Read Acts 11: 17, 18. This is the conclusion of Peter's argument; and the happy fact is that these men in Jerusalem were not only fully persuaded that Peter had done right, but they thanked God for the great lesson that was taught.

Now we come to a passage that is very important indeed. Read Acts 11: 19–26. Find Antioch on the map. It is north of Cæsarea and Tyre and Sidon; near where the shore of the Mediterranean Sea turns westward. Find Tarsus also, a little farther to the northwest. At the time of the persecution that had scattered the disciples, some of them had gone to Antioch, preaching to Jews only. But there were others of the disciples who willingly preached to Greeks. Here were other Gentiles receiving the religion of Jesus. This caused more surprise at Jerusalem. So Barnabas, who has been mentioned before, went up there to investigate. He was happy to find men of different races receiving the truth.

Now you will remember when Saul, or Paul, came to Jeru-

salem from Damascus, that it was Barnabas who had vouched for him. And you will remember also that when Saul got into trouble at Jerusalem, he was sent off to Tarsus to save his life. He remained there a long time. But now when someone was needed to take up this important work in Antioch it occurred to Barnabas that that man Saul would be just the one to do the work. So Barnabas went to Tarsus and hunted up Saul and brought him to Antioch and set him to work preaching to this mixed population. And for a year Barnabas worked with him.

The last phrase of verse 26 is very important: *The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

XXI. Herod's Persecution of the Church.

THE lesson passage is Acts 12: 1–24. This is a story, briefly and directly told. Read it carefully, observing the important points in its progress.

I. Herod's attack on the church.

Verse 1. "Herod the king." We must distinguish among the Herod who massacred the children at the time of the birth of Jesus, the Herod who saw him on the morning of the day of his crucifixion, and this Herod who persecuted the Christians. They are three different men, but of one family, a family famous for the evil that it did. Though the title "king" is used we must realize that they held their power under the authority of the Roman government. They were not Romans, but were of mixed race, natives of that part of the world where they lived and ruled. They had adopted the Jewish religion.

Verse 2. "James and John." Read Matthew 4: 21, Matthew 17: 1, Mark 10: 35–41. See how discipleship with Jesus led to martyrdom.

Verse 3. Herod did some things for the approval of the Jewish authorities. It was the time of the passover feast, the same time of the year at which Jesus was put to death.

II. Peter is imprisoned, that he may be the next victim.

Verse 4. "Four quaternions of soldiers." Each quaternion was a group of four. This made sixteen soldiers. Of course the groups, or quaternions, took turns guarding him. There would always be four soldiers on guard.

Verse 6. We learn further that Peter had chains on. Can you imagine any reason for having so strong a guard about Peter? But the care taken to prevent his rescue counted for nothing, as we shall see presently. Next read verses 18 and 19. That Peter was missing was not discovered till morning. Herod believes that the guard have neglected to watch; they are examined, and condemned to death. According to Roman law a soldier who slept on duty deserved to die.

But again we have a story of an angel coming to the prison: whoever it was that let Peter out was a good friend of his. But read the story, verses 7 to 11. In some way, under cover of the darkness of night, Peter was released from prison, and led out into the city street.

Read verses 12 to 17. Waked suddenly out of sleep, and so happy a thing as his release happening in a strange way, Peter could scarcely realize that he was awake and not dreaming. Verse 9 says that he thought it was a vision! But "he came to himself" in the chill of the night on the city street and (verse 12) went quickly to the house of friends. Do not forget the name of a young man of the household: "John whose surname was Mark." We shall have good reason to remember him. The house to which Peter went was the house of this young man's mother. What was going on in the house through the night?

Who heard Peter at the door?

What did she do?

What did other people say?

What was Peter doing in the meantime?

When he was admitted to the house what did he do?

Notice particularly verse 17. These people were greatly surprised when Peter appeared among them. Peter instantly signals them to be quiet; he is not safe from rearrest. Besides, he has something to say. He tells the story of being quietly wakened in his cell, of the chains being gently removed, of the doors opening as if of their own accord, of a friend who led him out into the city street and then disappeared. And he adds "Tell these things to James." John, the brother of James, has just been killed, and this message, that Peter has escaped, will comfort him. Then Peter hastened out and fled from the city.

Read the remainder of the chapter. It would not be human nature if the apostles had not taken satisfaction in the death of Herod. And when, on a day that gratified the pride of the wicked man, he died suddenly, it is not in the least surprising that the apostles believed that it was a sudden judgment of God upon him for his wrong-doing.

DIVISION IV

PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

22. Consecration of Paul and Barnabas.
23 Separation of Paul and Barnabas.
24. Singing in Prison.
25. Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill.
26. Apollos and Paul at Ephesus.
27. A Mob at Ephesus.
28. Paul's Last Journey to Jerusalem.
Review of Paul's Missionary Journeys.

XXII. Consecration of Paul and Barnabas.

THIS lesson is the story of Paul's first missionary journey. This was a great, new enterprise in the Christian church. We must realize, too, that Antioch had become the new center of Christianity. Read Acts 11: 29, 30. Barnabas and Saul were at work in Antioch. Word came that there was distress among the disciples in Jerusalem: during a widespread famine they have come to poverty. Remember the days when men who had property joined the community in Jerusalem, and sold their possession to provide the food for the community table. A lot of property was eaten up! So a contribution was asked from the members of the church in Antioch and the money was taken by Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem.

Now read Acts 12: 25. We learn elsewhere that Barnabas was the uncle of the young man, John Mark; you remember that it was to the home of this young man's mother that Peter went when he escaped from prison.

Read Acts 13: 1–3. The church in Antioch is so large as to have five ministers; "prophets and teachers" they are called. The success of the preachers, who went out from Jerusalem at the time of the persecution when Stephen was stoned, was a great satisfaction; and now it is determined to do this same kind of work deliberately. From Antioch, the new center of Christianity, missionaries are to be sent out far and wide. And Barnabas and Paul are chosen for this work, and are consecrated. John Mark goes with them as an attendant. Read Acts 13: 4–12. Trace the journey on the map. Observe also the incident of the sorcerer, or magician.

Now read Acts 13: 13, 14. Trace this further stage of the journey. Where did John Mark go? There was a quarrel of some kind; reference will be made to it in a later lesson. Observe carefully that this Antioch is not the place from which they started. There are two cities of the same name. This one is northwest of the other.

We need not spend time now on this speech of Paul. But go to Acts 13: 42–52, and see the consequences of it. We find the deeply rooted difference between Jews and Gentiles mani-

festing itself. Paul wants to preach to the Jews, but if they will not listen he gladly preaches to the Gentiles. Find Iconium on the map. Acts 14:3 tells us that they made a long stay there. But trouble continued. Read Acts 14:1–7.

At Lystra there was a cure of a lame man like the cure by Peter and John of the beggar at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. And some of the people were so enthusiastic that they thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods, and they called them by the names of two Greek gods, Jupiter and Mercury. But trouble came: some men, from places where Paul and Barnabas had just been, came to Lystra and stirred up a mob. They came where Paul was, and soon the stones were flying. Paul was struck and fell, and they thought he was dead. Then men in the mob grabbed him and dragged him away off down the street and outside the city. But there were good friends, newly made disciples, who came running and surrounded Paul as he lay apparently dead on the ground. Soon he opened his eyes, became conscious, got up slowly and with help, and went back into the city with his friends. And next day he was sufficiently recovered to be able to travel on, with Barnabas, to the next town.

Read Acts 14:19–28. This is the conclusion of the account of the journey. After the stoning of Paul they went to Derbe, and were very successful. Then they retraced a part of the journey, returning to places earlier visited, and, what is very important, they arranged for the work to be continued in these places: they "appointed elders in every church." Here was greater definiteness in organization than we have previously read of. What did they do when they reached home again in Antioch?

XXIII. Separation of Paul and Barnabas.

THIS lesson includes the account of the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey. But something important happened between the end of the first missionary journey and the beginning of the second: there was a great council in Jerusalem. The problem of the council was the same general question that we have considered, especially in Lesson XX, of the relation of Christianity to Judaism. When men not of the Jewish faith were converted to Christianity there were some of the apostles who thought they ought to be made subject to the whole ceremonial law of Judaism. There were others of the apostles who felt that Christianity had a different spirit and ideal, and that men should not be expected to accept those ancient rules of life. This decided difference of opinion was what led to a council in Jerusalem: the matter needed to be cleared up.

We have already seen that in Antioch the new center of Christianity had grown up. Men had come down there from Jerusalem arguing for the necessity of Christians submitting to all the old laws of Judaism. This made trouble: and so the church in Antioch appointed Paul and Barnabas and others to go up to the council in Jerusalem that the matter might be decided. There was a great deal of difference of opinion in the council, but the matter was finally brought to a conclusion in a speech by Peter arguing against making this demand on the new converts, by Barnabas and Paul adding to that argument and giving an account of the success of Christianity among the Gentiles, and then by James formulating a simple rule, that was acceptable to the council, which recognized a few great principles of morality. Thus the decision was in favor of greater freedom, and against keeping Christianity under the restrictions of Judaism. This was a great step in advance.

We have seen that Christianity was becoming more and more a distinct movement, living out a life of its own, and shaping itself as a new religion free from the restrictions of the mother church, the church of the Jews. After this important council two prominent men, Judas and Silas, went down from Jerusalem to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, and visited the

church there. There was great satisfaction in Antioch over the decision of the council. Judas and Silas remained there for some time, preaching and working, and then returned to Jerusalem.

Some time after this, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they repeat their missionary journey. They had worked together for years: you remember how Barnabas had befriended Paul in Jerusalem when he first joined the company of the apostles, and had set him at work in Antioch when the great opportunity opened there, and had traveled with him on that momentous missionary trip. But now Paul quarrels with Barnabas. The two men separate, never to work together again. You remember that on the first trip John Mark had started out with them as their attendant. Barnabas was his uncle. But John Mark had not gone the whole trip but had left them at Pamphylia. Now Barnabas wants him to go on this trip, and John Mark wants to go. But Paul refuses to have it so. It is over this question that Paul and Barnabas quarrel. And Barnabas takes John Mark and starts on a missionary trip. And Paul sends for Silas, one of the men who came to Antioch after the great council, and they start on a missionary trip.

Read Acts 13:13 and Acts 15:36–41. For the previous mention of Silas see Acts 15:22, 27, 32. Find Pamphylia on the map. Which direction did John Mark and his uncle Barnabas go on this second trip? You will find the word "cousin" used sometimes to designate the relationship between them.

The book of Acts does not tell us the story of the trip of John Mark and Barnabas; it proceeds to tell of Paul and Silas. This is the trip known as Paul's second missionary trip. Where are Syria and Cilicia? Read the first five verses of Acts 16. This introduces to us a young man of importance in the story of Christianity: Timothy. His mother was a Jewess who had become a Christian. His father was a Greek. Paul wanted him as an attendant, just as John Mark had been on the first part of the former journey. So Timothy journeyed with them. And wherever these apostles went they taught the people the freedom that had been decided upon by that great council in Jerusalem.

Read Acts 16:6–10. Trace the journey on the map. We have in this passage strange statements about supernatural *guidance* in the course of the journey. We may look upon this

as evidence of superstition; but men in modern times have let themselves decide important questions in accordance with "signs." It is not to be wondered at in this story.

But whatever the signs were that determined the course taken, the journey had tremendous significance, for it carried Christianity into Europe. The call of the man of Macedonia, in the vision, has become classic: "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

Read Acts 16: 11–15. This is the story of the first work for Christianity in Europe. Trace on the map the voyage across. Observe that Lydia provides the apostles with a place to live while they are in that city.

Lydia had gone to Philippi from Thyatira. Thyatira was a city across in Asia. She helps Christianity get a foothold in Europe. In providing a home for the apostles she provides a shelter for the new faith.

The story of this missionary trip will be continued in our next lesson.

XXIV. Singing in Prison.

THE lesson passage is Acts 16:16 to 17:15. Read first the story of the imprisonment of the apostles in Acts 16:16–34. Read the passage slowly, and watch carefully every point as you go along.

After reading the passage through, observe the following points:

Verses 16–18. The maid "possessed with a spirit." She was a poor nervous creature, regarded with superstitious awe as nervous and insane people sometimes have been. Her irrational sayings were used as a form of fortune-telling. She was practically a slave; she was held by men who made a great deal of money by this fortune-telling. She annoyed the apostles day after day, and Paul finally spoke, addressing his command to the evil spirit that he believed inhabited her body along with her own natural human spirit. This had a pronounced effect upon the distressed girl, and she was quiet and self-possessed.

Verses 19–21. Why did the masters of the girl attack Paul and Silas?

What did they do to them?

Where did they take them?

What accusation did they bring against them?

Do you think this accusation was true?

Was there anything in the gospel of Jesus that was wrong for Romans to obey?

Verses 22–24. What did the multitude do?

Acting according to popular clamor, what did the magistrates do?

And what command did they give?

Where were the apostles taken?

What special precautions did the jailer take to secure the prisoners?

Verse 25. How did the apostles manifest a brave and cheerful spirit? Were they enduring physical suffering at the same time? What had been done to them the day before, that still caused suffering? How were their feet placed during this night?

Verse 26. There was an earthquake that jarred the prison doors open. The jailer was asleep.

Verse 27. The jailer thought his prisoners were gone.

Verses 28–33. But he finds them safe, and seeks religious advice from these men who have shown that their religion can make them brave and cheerful under trying circumstances.

Verse 34. He transfers these two prisoners to his own house and treats them as guests. Afterwards they were returned to the prison.

Now read the story of the controversy between the prisoners and the magistrates: verses 35–40. According to Roman law a citizen of the Roman empire could not be beaten as these men had been unless they had been tried and found guilty. It was customary for Roman officers, in dealing with other races, to assert the authority of the Roman empire by beating prisoners who were brought for trial. The theory was that this would give them a wholesome respect for the law. From such treatment Roman citizens were exempt: and Paul, though of Jewish blood, was born a Roman citizen. He frequently needed all the advantage that that fact gave him! Here, by his claim for "us" we learn that Silas was also a Roman citizen. So they are not contented with being released from unjust imprisonment: they have a claim against these magistrates who have violated Roman law. They humiliate the magistrates; but leave the city.

To whose house did they go when the magistrates led them out of the prison? Where have you read of this person before?

Now read Acts 17: 1–15. Find the places on the map. Observe that this passage brings Paul to Athens, the most cultured city of the Greeks.

Verse 1. Thessalonica. Again and again you find Paul as he visits these places going first to the Jewish synagogue and preaching to the Jews, afterwards to others, the Gentiles. Here when he argued that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, long expected by the Jews, the objection was made that this Jesus had suffered, and could not therefore have been the Messiah. But Paul argues from the Hebrew scriptures, our Old Testament, that it was to be expected that the Messiah should suffer, and that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Many Jews believed, and also a great many Greeks. But what did some Jews do? Notice the graphic phrase "vile fellows of

the rabble"; also the description of the apostles of Jesus "these that have turned the world upside down are come hither also"!

But here the apostles are not imprisoned. They are given freedom such as we would call being "let out on bail." Jason, a man of the city, has to give "security"; so do others in behalf of these apostles.

Then by night the apostles are sent away. Where? Find it on the map. In this place the same arguments from the Jewish scriptures are made. And here the people go to their scriptures and study the matter thoroughly: every day there are Bible classes to consider the questions. Again both Jews and Greeks are persuaded of the truth of what the apostles have taught them.

But men, from the last place that the apostles had visited, came down there and made trouble again. Read verses 13–15. Paul is sent away: may it be that he makes more dissension than the others? But when Paul arrives at Athens he sends a demand that Silas and Timothy shall come immediately. While Paul was waiting at Athens something important happened: but we shall learn about that in our next lesson.

There is for us now, however, an important matter to consider. In Thessalonica and in Beroea, the arguments of Paul were based on the Hebrew scriptures, our Old Testament, in our Bibles. Where was the New Testament? None of it was yet written. As this work of establishing churches went on, it occurred to some of the apostles and others that it would be well, for purposes of instruction, to write down the story of the work of Jesus. Several "gospels" were written, four of which are retained in our New Testament. The first of these to be written was the gospel according to Mark, probably written by the young man John Mark, of whom we have studied.

But among the very first books of the New Testament to be written were letters that Paul wrote to some of these places that he visited, and in which he established churches. After the times which we are now studying, Paul was a prisoner for some years. During that time he wrote some of these letters. He was greatly interested in the success of these churches which he had established. In some letters he commends the churches for faithfulness, in other letters he speaks of sins that he hears they have tolerated in their members. In many letters he discusses *what* the people shall believe.

Then there were other apostles who wrote letters. And in the case of some letters we do not know who wrote them: there are some which have had Paul's name attached to them that he probably did not write. But a large part of the New Testament is made of letters written to the churches. And they are not arranged in the New Testament in the order in which they were written. But turn to the front of the New Testament and look at the "names and order" of the books. The book next after Acts is a letter written to the people of the church in Rome, then two to Corinth, one each to Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossæ; then two to Thessalonica. Find these places on the map. Not all the letters written to the churches by the apostles have been kept in our New Testament, just as not all of the "gospels" were put in.

In this lesson we have read of Paul's first visits to Philippi and Thessalonica. Those are two of the places to which letters were afterwards written. Turn to the letter written to Philippi and read the first two verses. It may be that Timothy wrote a good deal of this letter. Now in the last chapter of the letter read verses 15 and 16. You will see that the people of Philippi had sent help to Paul on this very trip of which we have just been studying, when he was at Thessalonica.

Now turn to the first letter to the people of Thessalonica, and read the first verse. By whom was it written? We cannot know how much of it was written by each man. Read in the second chapter the first two verses. Here mention is made of the trouble that the apostles had at Philippi on this trip. Now look at the first verse of the second letter to the people of Thessalonica, and see by whom it was written.

The name Silvanus at the head of each of these letters seems like a totally new name to us. But leave out the letters v-a-n and we have the name Silus, which is close to Silas. It is indeed the same name: Silas was the form used among the Jews in Jerusalem, and it is so written in Acts. But Silvanus is the form used among the people nearer Rome, a Romanized form of the name. And in various epistles it is this form that we find.

Paul, Silas and Timothy are the three apostles making this missionary trip that we are studying, and their names head these two letters to the people of Thessalonica.

XXV. Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill.

THE lesson is Acts 17:16 to 18:23. In Acts 17:22–31 we have one of the finest passages in the whole Bible. This is the address which Paul made in Athens.

We will take up the whole lesson under the following headings:

(*a*) At Athens, 17:16–34.

(*b*) Paul goes to Corinth, 18:1–4.

(*c*) He is joined there by Silas and Timothy, 18:5–11.

(*d*) More trouble, 18:12–17.

(*e*) Return to Antioch, 18:18–23. This is the end of this second missionary journey.

(*a*) Verse 16. "Waited for them"; for whom?

"His spirit was provoked"; what was the Jewish attitude toward idolatry? They did not believe it right to represent a spiritual being by a material thing. The ancient commandment was "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image nor any likeness of anything in heaven above . . ." The Greeks believed in many gods, and represented them by images. Paul had never seen anything to equal the number of idols that there were in Athens.

Verse 17. In what two places did Paul discuss religion? Should religion have a place in both?

Verse 18. Paul encountered in that city of learning Greek philosophers. The Epicurean philosophers believed in enjoying the world as the greatest good that a man's life can accomplish. The Stoic philosophers believed that bodily feelings and their expression should be suppressed in order that the higher ideas of the mind might find their full expression.

Verse 19. Paul had an opportunity to address these men of culture.

Verses 20, 21. Distinguish between idle curiosity and the thirst for knowledge.

Verses 22–31. Paul's sermon. Read it through carefully, taking note of the marginal readings.

Now go through it again noting these points in the argument:

"You are religious (22) but you confess yourselves ignorant of him whom you worship (23). You cannot bring gifts to God

(24, 25); but God does desire that men seek him (26, 27). He is not far to seek (28); men find him in repentance (30, 31).

Notice that in this address the religious spirit of the Greeks is not condemned. Paul takes toward these people an attitude of sympathy. He declares his purpose is to help them, for he says "What ye worship in ignorance this set I forth unto you."

Paul had closed his short speech with the idea that the resurrection had shown that Jesus had special authority in religion. There was much variety of opinion about the speech. See verses 32–34.

(*b*) Paul goes to Corinth. Find these places on the map. Corinth was a flourishing city not many miles from Athens, to the westward. Read 18: 1–4. Claudius was the fourth Roman emperor, who reigned from 41–54 A. D.

What two people did Paul meet?

Of what trade was Paul?

It is difficult, in reading these accounts of active missionary trips and exciting events, to realize that, to a large extent, Paul and the other apostles earned their living by manual labor as they went along. Turn to II Thessalonians 3: 6–11, noticing especially verse 8. There Paul reminds those people of the manner of his life among them: we cannot doubt its truth — these people to whom it was written knew the truth of the matter.

On this point see also I Corinthians 9: 6, 7, and verses 11–15. I Corinthians 4: 11, 12. Acts 20: 33–35. In these references in the books of Corinthians, Paul wrote to these very people among whom he is now working and preaching.

(*c*) Silas and Timothy come, verses 5–11. Read this passage. Again Paul is arguing that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jewish race. But he gets impatient with their opposition and emphatically declares that he will no longer preach to Jews but will preach to Gentiles. "Shook out his raiment," — see Luke 9: 5. Matthew 10: 14. Mark 6: 11. Acts 13: 51. "Your blood be upon your own heads." See Matthew 23: 30–35. Matthew 27: 24, 25. Acts 5: 28. Acts 20: 26.

The expression "I am clean" means I am innocent. Paul had not failed to tell them the truth as he saw it: if they did not receive it, that was a matter in which he felt that he was blameless.

Verse 7. He did not thereby sever relations with the Jewish Aquila and Priscilla; see verse 18. Verse 7 means that, turning from the Jews and their synagogue, he went to the house of this Roman, Justus Titus, and took it as a place to preach in: it was very near the synagogue. How long did Paul continue this work?

(*d*) More trouble. Read verses 12–17. Achaia was a province, containing Corinth. When a new governor came, the Jews thought they had an opportunity to get Paul into trouble. Did Paul make a defense at the trial to which he was brought?

What did Gallio say to the Jews?

What did he do to them?

(*e*) The return to Antioch. Read verses 18–23. Trace the journey from Corinth to Ephesus, Cæsarea, Jerusalem (for when it says he went up and saluted the church it means the church in Jerusalem), and Antioch. This is the end of the second missionary journey. But the account of the third missionary journey begins immediately, in verse 23. We will begin the study of it in our next lesson.

Supplementary Reading for Lesson XXV, Paul's Sermon on Mars Hill

The sermon of Paul, Acts 17:22–31 expresses in splendid language the greatness of God and the thought that he is above the help of human hands. That passage may well be compared with the two following passages:

The mighty God even the Lord hath spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same. . . .

I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices; nor for thy burnt offerings which are ever before me.

I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy field.

For every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fulness thereof.

Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most high.

Psalm 50.

Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? . . .

Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

The workman melteth a graven image and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. . . .

To whom then will ye liken me, or (to whom) shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by their names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong. . . .

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?

Isaiah 40.

XXVI. Apollos and Paul at Ephesus.

THE story of the second missionary journey scarcely ends when the story of the third missionary journey begins. Read Acts 18:23 to 19:7. Find on the map Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, and Alexandria in Egypt.

John the Baptist had preached before Jesus began to preach, and had baptized those who had accepted his teaching. Many people went out from Jerusalem to hear him, across the Jordan river. You will recall the fact that Jews of many lands made trips to Jerusalem. At this time, in Egypt, in the city of Alexandria, there lived a young man named Apollos. He went up to Jerusalem to see the great temple of the Jewish religion, for he was a Jew. And while he was there he heard of this strange strong man, John the Baptist, and he went out to hear him. He believed what he heard John preach and gladly went down into the Jordan to be baptized. Then he went away to his home in Egypt again. In the busy years that followed he thought much of what he had heard from the lips of John, and though he heard of Jesus he got no clear idea that the teaching of Jesus was greater than the teaching of John. And Apollos also spent a great deal of time in the study of the Hebrew scriptures.

But after some years Apollos decided to preach. He crossed over the Mediterranean sea and came to Ephesus. He was very earnest, and he preached the same ideas that he had heard John the Baptist preach and baptized those that believed, as John baptized. But you remember Aquila and Priscilla, the Jew and his wife with whom Paul had lived in Corinth, and who had crossed over to Ephesus. They had heard from Paul a great deal about Jesus and the larger truths of his gospel. They began to hear in Ephesus of this man Apollos, and they went to hear him preach. They invited him home with them as they had invited Paul. And they told Apollos what they had learned of Jesus and his way of life. Apollos listened with wonder to the new large faith, and eagerly believed what he heard. He became convinced that Jesus was indeed the Messiah of his people.

Then Apollos, having preached with joy this larger faith,

crossed over into Greece, into the province of Achaia, to the city of Corinth, where Paul had lived with Aquila and Priscilla. Now, after Apollos had left Ephesus, Paul arrived there, having traveled across country from Antioch. When he was at work in Antioch he found men who had become disciples through the preaching of Apollos, and who had been baptized not in the name of Jesus but in the name of John the Baptist! Paul showed to these men the larger truths that Jesus had taught, and urged them to accept the broader faith. Then they were baptized again, this time in the name of Jesus. Paul had told them of the scene on the day of pentecost, and of other times when that strange phenomenon happened called "speaking with tongues"; and the same thing happened to these men in Ephesus.

For the next three months Paul preached in the synagogue in Ephesus. But the same thing happened that occurred at Corinth: Paul was impatient with the opposition of the Jews. And so he got a school building, which belonged to a Roman, named Tyrannus, and he taught there every day, and kept his disciples separate from the Jews who had not accepted Christianity.

Read Acts 19:8–10, 18–20, omitting for the present verses 11–17. As the work goes forward during this period of more than two years there are many superstitious people who give up their delusions, and the practice of magic. One day as they talked together about rooting out the evil it was suggested that the books of magic be burned. So the people who had given up the belief in these things brought their books and piled them up in a public square of the city, and there they made a large fire of them. When they talked over the price of the books they found it was a large sum of money. You know in those days all books were made by hand: each copy was written out by hand. And books were very costly.

But there was some superstition left. Read verses 11–17. The same people who had believed these writings that went up in smoke in the public square, would be the very people whose minds would turn to similar errors. If Paul dropped his handkerchief, and one of these people picked it up, it was believed that the handkerchief could be carried where there was a sick person and the sick person would get well. Or if Paul

took off his tentmaker's apron to go into the school building to preach, and one of these people picked it up and carried it away, it was believed to have the same power. So they thought it profitable to loan handkerchiefs and aprons to Paul!

The work went forward with great success in Ephesus. In verse 10 we read "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word": Asia does not mean here what we mean by it, the continent; it means a little province around Ephesus. This shows that people not only in the city but in the whole country round about heard the gospel and believed.

XXVII. A Mob at Ephesus.

WHILE Paul was at work in Ephesus his plans grew larger. He saw greater possibilities in the work, greater visions of the influence that Christianity could have. He planned to cross over into Europe again, to go through Macedonia, and through the province of Achaia, the southern part of Greece. Then he wanted to make another trip to Jerusalem. But the height of his ambition was to go to Rome. Rome was the capital of the whole Roman Empire. If Christianity could be established there, it would gain a great advantage. Strange things were to happen to Paul in the next few years, but he was finally to get to Rome and do the work he hoped. But if he could have been told how he would go to Rome he would scarcely have believed the strange story. Read Acts 19:21.

But an exciting event occurs in Ephesus before Paul gets away. The goddess Diana was worshiped by many people in that part of the world, and people used to have little silver "shrines" with a figure of Diana, and used them in their prayers to Diana. It was like the use of the little silver crucifixes that some persons have now. But so many people bought them that making them was a prosperous business. Many men made their living by this. A man named Demetrius was at the head of this business.

Paul had the strong religious idea against all forms of idolatry. He had made a splendid statement of this faith at Athens, in the sermon on Mars Hill. And the people in and about Ephesus had heard Paul again and again declaring that, "they are not gods that are made with hands." The trade in little silver idols diminished, and people who had formerly believed in them now spoke with derision of them.

So Demetrius called together the men whose business was in danger, all the silversmiths and the men of allied trades. He made a speech to them and appealed to their selfish interests and their religious prejudices. A great meeting was called in the theater to stir up enthusiasm for the worship of Diana. Two of Paul's associates were seized and the whole city was excited by the mob. In the confusion some people shouted one thing,

some another. But, as our story tells us with unconscious humor, the greater part of the mob "knew not wherefore they were come together." But for a couple of hours there were yelling and confusion.

Paul was bold enough to want to go right into the theater to speak to the mob. But wise friends persuaded him not to do that. A man named Alexander got up and tried to speak, but they saw that his face looked Jewish and they yelled him down! But the town clerk finally went into the theater and got them quieted down enough to listen to a short speech from him. He argued that the worship of Diana was not in danger, and that it was wise to be quiet. Then he pointed out that if there were a question of justice in connection with the business of Demetrius it could be settled in the courts. He explained that the Roman authorities held the local authorities responsible for keeping good order, and that the city was liable to be called to account for this breaking of the peace. Then he urged the men to go home, and the crowd melted away.

Read Acts 19: 23–41, imagining the scenes as the story goes forward.

Paul sent Timothy and Erastus ahead into Macedonia and then he followed. From there he went southward into Greece, spending a few months in traveling about in the work of strengthening the churches. He planned to take a ship from a port in Greece for Syria, on the way to Jerusalem, but he found that there was a plot against his life; and to escape his Jewish enemies he suddenly reversed his plans and went northward again through Macedonia, setting sail from Philippi and crossing to Troas. He had a strong company of men with him in this flight from his enemies. Read Acts 20: 1–6, which tells the story of his trip across into Europe and back again. Find the places on the map.

We have studied in this lesson the story of some of the things Paul experienced in Ephesus. Turn to the letter to the church in Ephesus. In this letter Paul expresses much affection for the people of the church there. Read one important passage from it: chapter 6, verses 10 to 20. Considering the trouble Paul got into in so many places it is not surprising that he describes a Christian as a good soldier!

XXVIII. Paul's Last Journey to Jerusalem.

THE lesson passage is Acts 20: 7 to 21: 26. It contains much that is of importance.

Here we have the story of a long journey, the beginning of which was told in our last lesson. Besides the account of the journey itself we find stories of interesting incidents along the way.

First let us trace the course of this journey; then study the incidents along the way. Read again Acts 20: 1–6. Now take the map and trace this interesting journey. Paul had gone into Macedonia and Greece again, and had made his plans to go to Jerusalem, sailing from a Grecian port to a Syrian port. But, discovering the plot against his life, he suddenly went in a totally different direction, northward through Macedonia. Reaching Philippi he took passage on a ship and crossed the north end of the Ægæum Sea. It must have been slow sailing for it took five days for this short voyage. He crossed the narrow peninsula of Assos, on the west coast of Asia Minor, "going by land."

In Troas occurred the incident of the over-long sermon, related in Acts 20: 7–12. *Defer the consideration of it till we have traced the whole course of the journey.*

Read next verses 13–16. Continuing the journey, others of the party had gone around in the ship while Paul had traveled across by land. Setting sail again, with Paul on board, they must have found better sailing, for less time is consumed on the next stage of the voyage. Various points are given which in a general way indicate their course. Identify these points on the map. The next important point is Miletus.

At Miletus occurred the incident related in Acts 20: 17–38. *Omit this for the present. Continue the journey.*

Read Acts 21: 1–8. From Miletus, to Cos, to Rhodes, to Patara. Patara, as you observe, is a port on the Mediterranean Sea. Their sailing has been in the comparatively sheltered waters of the Ægæum Sea. At Patara they changed ships, doubtless changing to a larger ship. They are to sail through waters that are much more open, and they will lack the shelter of islands. They sailed to Tyre. Here the ship

discharged her cargo. After spending a week in Tyre the voyage was continued southward a little farther, to Cæsarea, which, as you observe, is a seaport comparatively near to Jerusalem.

In Cæsarea occurred an interesting incident. However, we will defer its consideration for the present.

Read Acts 21 : 15–17. This brings Paul at last into Jerusalem. Events occurred there that are of the highest importance, and of great interest, as we shall see as we go on with our lessons.

Having traced the whole course of the journey, let us study important incidents along the way.

An Over-long Sermon.

Acts 20:7–12. "The first day of the week." That was Sunday. The Jewish Sabbath was Saturday. But the stories of the resurrection of Jesus fixed Sunday as the day of its occurrence, and, as there was so much importance attached to the idea of the resurrection in the teaching of the early church, the day when they believed the resurrection of Jesus took place was gradually adopted as their "one day in seven," the sacred Sabbath. Here was one more point at which Christianity broke away from the Jewish religion. Choosing a different day for the principal day of worship did a great deal to separate Christianity from the Jewish religion. To the present day there is trouble over the use of the two days as the Sabbath, where Jews and Christians live in the same communities.

"Break bread." Read Luke 22:19 and I Corinthians 11: 23–26. Breaking bread together, that is, eating a simple meal, was used in the religious spirit as an expression of comradeship in their religion.

"Prolonged his speech," "many lights," "Paul discoursed yet longer"; and what was the result? What happened to the man who went asleep during the sermon? Verse 9 says he was "taken up dead." A recent translation says "picked up for dead": this is confirmed as the real fact by verse 10, where Paul says, "Make ye no ado, for his life is in him."

What did they do then? They had another meal! And then Paul preached the remainder of the night! And, having preached "even till break of day," Paul set out upon his journey.

A Council at Miletus.

Acts 20:17–38. Ephesus was an inland city. Paul had recently escaped from serious trouble there, and did not want to return now and risk long delay in his journey. So he sent to Ephesus for the principal members of the church to meet him down on the coast, at Miletus. Verses 18–35 contain the outline of an address which Paul made: we can hardly suppose that it was the whole address considering the length at which he had spoken at the previous place!

In this address verses 18–21 declare Paul's fidelity in his work for them; verses 22–24 his fearlessness of dangers ahead; verses 25–27 are a farewell; verses 28–31 are advice; verses 32–35 declare his hope for them. "The words of the Lord Jesus": these are not found in the gospels.

Paul was going to Jerusalem, fully convinced that his enemies in the Jewish church would take advantage of his presence there to carry out some plot against him. So the leave-taking between Paul and these friends was indeed sad.

At Cæsarea.

Acts 21:8–14. "Philip": see Acts 6:1–6, 8:4–8, 8:26–40. He was, indeed, an "Evangelist." Note the graphic prophecy of Agabus. But this does not tell Paul anything new. Paul's friends seem to be more afraid than he is.

At Jerusalem.

Acts 21:17–26, "to forsake Moses": it was a common term in speaking of the whole ceremonial law of the Jews to call it "the law of Moses." Here again is the great question of the relation of Christianity to the Jewish religion. Verse 22, trouble is ahead. Verses 23–26, a scheme to make it appear that Paul still regarded devoutly the Jewish law. But we shall see that this scheme did not serve to save Paul.

Review of Paul's Missionary Journeys.

General Conditions.

The disciples, scattered from Jerusalem by persecution, preached wherever they went. Many new churches resulted. Antioch became the new center of Christianity. Paul (or Saul) began his active work there. See Acts 11:19–26.

The idea occurred to some of the workers that, as churches had resulted from preaching by men traveling from city to city, it would be well to send men out for that definite purpose. Therefore the Missionary Journeys were planned.

First Journey.

Consecration of Paul and Barnabas. 13:1–3. First stage of the first journey. 13:4–6.

To the other city named Antioch. 13:13, 14.

Trouble in Antioch, 13:50 to 14:1. See also 14:4–7.

And again 14:19.

The return journey, 14:20–26.

The success of the journey caused great rejoicing in the church which had sent out the missionaries.

Second Journey.

The plan. 15:36. Barnabas and Mark and their journey; Paul and Silas and their journey, 15:37–41.

The further journey of Barnabas and Mark is not recorded; but trace the journey of Paul and Silas. 16:1. Timothy was added to the company.

Westward to the sea, 16:6–10.

Crossing over into Europe, 16:11–15. See 17:1.

Hasty departure, 17:10–15. Paul at Athens, 17:16. See 18:1, 18:5.

Starting eastward again, 18:18.

Read 18:19–22. "Saluted the church"; doubtless this was the church in Jerusalem.

Then he "went down to Antioch"; that is the end of the second journey.

This journey has carried Christianity far from the place of

its birth, and into conditions very different. In Europe the gospel has been preached.

Third Journey.

Acts 18: 23. "And having spent some time there (in Antioch) he departed." We have no means of guessing how long is meant by "some time"; but the author of the book of Acts barely finishes his account of the end of the second missionary journey before he hurries to the story of the third.

"Galatia and Phrygia"; provinces, probably containing many towns and villages.

19: 1. "Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus"; little time is spent on the incidents of this part of the journey. (Meantime Apollos had begun his work; from Ephesus Apollos had crossed over into Corinth, in Greece.)

19: 21. Paul's purpose; a growing ambition to spread the gospel far and wide. Into Macedonia he sent two men, intending to follow, 19: 22.

Paul lingered at Ephesus. While there, occurred the incident of the mob concerning the "Diana of the Ephesians."

20: 1–12. Macedonia and Greece.

20: 3. The return journey is begun. Again it is the intention of Paul to go up to Jerusalem. Instead of sailing directly, the first of the journey is made by land, in a roundabout way. Why was this?

On board ship at last, 20: 4–6. But the sailing is slow. That was but a short distance to accomplish in five days.

At Troas occurred the incident of the over-long sermon.

20: 13–16. Troas to Miletus. There Paul met the elders of the church of Ephesus. Locate the points of this part of the journey.

Miletus to Patara. 21: 1. Here they changed ships. Observe that they have been in sheltered waters; now they will no longer be. This change of ships was probably to a larger ship.

Patara to Jerusalem, 21: 2–8, and verses 15 and 16. The church in Jerusalem rejoices at his success (verses 17–19).

Fourth Journey.

Paul's fourth journey was as a prisoner, going from Jerusalem to Rome. Later lessons deal with it.

DIVISION V

CLOSING YEARS OF PAUL'S WORK

29. Paul Arrested in Jerusalem.
30. Paul on Trial before the Jewish Council.
31. Paul's Trial before Felix.
32. Paul's Appeal to Cæsar.
33. Paul's Address before Agrippa.
Review of Paul's Experiences as a Prisoner in Judea.
34. Paul Shipwrecked.
35. The Winter after the Shipwreck.
36. Paul's Last Years in Rome.

XXIX. Paul Arrested in Jerusalem.

WE have now come to the last day of Paul's freedom. From this time on, he is a prisoner. And, though he accomplishes much before the end of his life, we have no certainty that he ever had another day of liberty. The book of Acts tells of none. As a prisoner he was taken to Rome. There he had a good many privileges, but there is no certainty as to the manner of his death, nor as to whether he was set free there.

The lesson passage is Acts 21:27 to 22:30. First let us take up the story in detail; then study various phases of the situation, a situation that is dramatic.

It is the time of pentecost, a great Jewish feast. Jews of many nations are gathered together in Jerusalem. Religious feelings are intense. Paul has gone about the city, and worshiped in the great temple, in entire peace for nearly a week. But there are, in the crowds in Jerusalem, several of the same Jews that had made trouble for him at various points on his missionary journeys. They hate him because he has declared that some of the established laws of the Jewish church are not necessary to religion.

In the temple at Jerusalem there was an outer court where men of any race or religion could go, the court of the Gentiles. But into the temple itself only devout Jews were permitted to go. With Paul in Jerusalem is seen a friend of his, not a Jew, from Ephesus. This man had gone with Paul from Ephesus after the riot there, and traveled with him through Macedonia and Greece. These Jews who had made trouble for Paul elsewhere, and who saw this Gentile with him, suspected that Paul had taken him into the part of the temple where only the Jews were permitted to go. And that suspicion was enough to precipitate the trouble. They raised a cry, a crowd collected, and Paul was seized. They were dragging him out to kill him, but the Roman soldiers, who were acting as police in the city, arrested Paul and his life was saved. Read Acts 21:27–36. Imagine the scene as you read it. The writer gives excellent descriptions of mobs!

The chief captain of the Roman soldiers thinks that he has

arrested a dangerous character; he mistakes Paul for a man who had recently started a rebellion against the Roman government. When Paul is being taken into the prison, and is going up the steps, the impulse to preach is so strong that he seeks an opportunity! He spoke to the Roman officer in Greek; then he addressed the Jewish mob in Hebrew. Read Acts 21:37 to 22:2.

Omit for the present the speech, and go on with the story. Paul has told these people that he has been directed, in what he has been doing, by the spirit of the same God as they worshiped. He got as far as to say that he was thus directed to go "unto the Gentiles"; but that word "Gentiles" was like a spark in the powder, causing the intensity of Jewish feeling to explode again after the self-restraint of listening. Read Acts 22:22–24. The confusion is renewed: as if there was not enough already to prevent men seeing clearly "they threw dust in the air"! Paul was still on the outer steps of the prison, but now the chief captain hurries him inside away from the mob, in order that quiet may be restored.

A common method with the Romans was to scourge men who were arrested, in order to get a confession from them. But Roman citizens, until tried and convicted of crime, were exempt from this: it was used before trial, to extort confession, only in the enforcement of law against those who were not citizens of the Roman Empire. The chief captain has turned the prisoner over to a centurion (a commander of one hundred Roman soldiers), who has Paul tied up in preparation for the scourging. But Paul is a Roman citizen! He waits till the preparations are made, and then says quietly, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?" The centurion hurries away to the chief captain, and the chief captain comes to Paul, and speaks about Roman citizenship. Paul was born in a Roman town in Asia Minor. This chief captain was an alien who had to buy his citizenship! The officers should, according to Roman law, have ascertained whether Paul were a Roman citizen before binding him, even in preparation for scourging. He could have brought suit against them for this, and they fear this will be done.

But next day, after a night in the prison, the chief captain *brought* Paul into the presence of the council of the Jewish

church; for he wants to know of what they accuse Paul. But what happened then and immediately after is our next lesson. Read Acts 22:25–30.

Now we have some interesting matters with regard to that speech that Paul made on the steps of the prison. Turn back and read Acts 22:3–21. Here is Paul's argument that the same God, whom the Jews worship, has guided him in his work among the Gentiles for which they hate him. And in the course of this address Paul tells the story of the strange event on the way to Damascus.

There is, in this lesson, a matter of the highest importance which we must carefully consider. There are three short phrases that mean much in the history of the world and the development of Christianity:

In Acts 21:37, "Dost thou know Greek?"

In Acts 22:2, "He spake unto them in the Hebrew language."

In Acts 22:28, "But I am a Roman born."

The three greatest forces of the world at that time are involved in the incident.

The life of the Hebrew people, of the Greeks and of the Romans had characteristic results. For several centuries the Hebrew people, the Jews, had been governed by other nations; but they had gone on developing their religion. During the latter years of the two Hebrew kingdoms, Israel and Judah, and during the centuries that followed, there was a remarkable succession of men, the Hebrew prophets. They were preachers of righteousness, and teachers of the life of the spirit. In religion the Hebrew people attained preëminence. Jesus was the last and the greatest of the Hebrew prophets.

The Greeks, at this time, had also ceased to be a nation: they had been conquered by the Romans. But they had, during the life of their nation, developed a language of wonderful beauty. They had developed, too, the physical beauty of art, and the mental orderliness of philosophy. We are accustomed to think of the missionary spirit as expressed in the desire to teach a religion to other nations; but there was a missionary spirit, among the Greeks of that time, that expressed itself in a different way. The Greeks desired to make their language the language of the nations, and to lead men to accept their way of thinking and living. Educated Greeks went out through other

nations and established schools where language, art, philosophy, and physical exercises were taught. And Greek became the language that was best known among all nations: that is, if a man spoke Greek he could be understood by more men than if he spoke any other one language. And you know that the language is still taught in schools and colleges, for it has been a subject of instruction in many nations from that time to this. We still feel the influence of that missionary activity of the Greeks.

The great ambition of the people of Rome was to make Roman law the law of the world, to bring all the nations under one government. Up to that time no other nation ever existed that had seen as clearly the principles on which a strong government could be based, or which had such a genius for law. There were more people under the control of Roman law than under any other political influence.

In a wonderful way Christianity was related to these three great forces of the world of that time. (*a*) Paul was of the Jewish, or Hebrew, race, with the spiritual power and religious energy that came of Hebrew ancestry. (*b*) When the books of the New Testament were written they were written in Greek, though Jesus had spoken a Hebrew dialect. But Paul spoke Greek, and was able in his journeys in many countries to use that language. (*c*) Now in the course of time the new religion was adopted as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Already we have seen that the greatest apostle of Christianity is a Roman citizen, and protects himself by that fact. And in this lesson he is arrested by Roman soldiers, and the result is that he is taken to Rome and does a great work there for the establishment of Christianity.

The great facts that Paul was of Hebrew blood, of Greek education, and a Roman citizen are brought out clearly in this lesson. In becoming a world-religion Christianity used the three great forces, Hebrew spirituality, Greek language, and Roman law.

XXX. Paul on Trial before the Jewish Council.

RECALL that Paul was in the temple in Jerusalem and that Jews raised a mob to stone him, or kill him in some way; and that his life was saved by his arrest by Roman soldiers. He was imprisoned over night and on the morrow the Roman officer attempted to find out the real truth in the case by bringing Paul face to face with the Jewish council.

Think of the scenes in the presence of this council in which Christianity was involved. Jesus was condemned by it, Peter and John were tried by it, Stephen was condemned by it and taken out and stoned. It was the highest authority in the Jewish religion. But let us remember that it was not a part of the government; that the Romans governed the land. But the Roman governors sometimes consulted this council in order to keep peace with the Jewish people. Therefore Paul was brought before it at this time that the governor might know of what he was accused.

Read Acts 23: 1–10. After reading the passage right through, look at it more in detail. Verse 1, was Paul self-possessed? What does Paul mean by what he says of conscience? The high priest is not the same whom we have read of in former lessons. What command did he give after Paul spoke of conscience? And what angry retort did Paul make? What did Paul call the high priest? What did Jesus say in Matthew 23: 27–28? Verse 4, what rebuke was administered to Paul? And what very sarcastic answer did Paul make?

Now what device did Paul use to divide his enemies and give himself a chance? What two parties were represented in the council? How did the two parties differ in their idea of the resurrection? See Mark 12: 18. Luke 20: 27. Matthew 22: 23. Matthew 22: 34. Matthew 16: 1–12. Matthew 3: 4–7.

With what party did Paul declare his affiliation? Was he really, in other things, of their spirit? With what one doctrine of theirs did he hold? What was the result in the council when Paul made his declaration? Was that what he wanted? Who stood up for Paul's defense? How did Paul escape? Do you

think the chief captain accomplished what he hoped by the meeting of the council?

Verse 11. What cheering vision did Paul have? With what ambition did it accord? See Acts 19: 21.

Read Acts 23: 12–35. What plot was formed against Paul? What was the form of agreement among the plotters? How many men entered into the plot? What opportunity for success did they count upon? Who warned Paul? To whom did Paul send him? What was the message of the centurion? How did the chief captain receive the young man? Verse 20. What request was to be made of the chief captain? If this were granted what would happen? What was the answer of the chief captain to the young man? To whom did the chief captain give commands? What were they to do? How was Paul to be disposed of? To what city was he to go? Who was the Roman governor? Read the letter from the chief captain to the governor.

Verse 27. What special reason does he give for rescuing Paul? Was this true? What do we find to have been the chief captain's general impression, resulting from the meeting of the council? What is Felix to do?

Read verses 31–35. Under what circumstances was Paul taken away? Did the soldiers make the entire journey with Paul? Who "came to Cæsarea"?

Judging by the form of the name of that place, by whom was it built? Who was situated there? What question was asked of Paul? "Province," that is, province of the Roman Empire. What in the letter caused this as the first question? What did he tell Paul? What did he do with him?

Look at the map and see the journey that Paul has made. This was not very far, but it was the first part of the journey that finally brought him to Rome, and to the opportunity for the doing of a great work there.

General Questions for Discussion.

What, evidently, was the attitude of the Roman officers toward the Jews?

What reason was there for that attitude?

What was the attitude of Paul toward the Jews?

And what towards the Romans?

At what was Paul evidently aiming in these events, an acquittal or to get to Rome?

Notice the advantage to Paul, and to Christianity, of his Roman citizenship.

See, too, how Paul used the jealousies and divisions among his enemies to break the solid wall of hatred with which he was confronted.

XXXI. Paul's Trial before Felix.

READ the lesson passage entirely through: Acts 24: 1–23. Recall that a plot was formed in Jerusalem that Paul should be killed between the prison and the council chamber of the Jewish council. So Paul was taken, under a strong guard, to Cæsarea. The examination of Paul before the Jewish council had not been creditable to his enemies. Paul is to be examined again, but the high priest and his councilors have to make the journey to Cæsarea where Paul is imprisoned in the governor's palace. Felix was at this time the governor. So this trial before Felix was a trial before the Roman governor.

It is interesting to see that Paul's Jewish accusers get some one else to speak for them. The man's name is Tertullus, which suggests that he is a Roman. He is "an orator"; that is, one who took the arguments that were furnished to him and put them into effective form. He was a "good speaker." Observe the very courteous phrases with which Tertullus began his speech. Of course the speech is very much abbreviated here.

Observe the four accusations against Paul. Can you, from the knowledge you have gathered about Paul, refute these charges? They are:

1. That he is "a pestilent fellow."
2. That he is a mover of insurrections among the Jews throughout the world.
3. That he is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.
4. That he tried to profane the temple.

Then Tertullus suggests, in verse 8, that Paul can be made to confess these things. And the Jews add argument to prove the charges: verse 9 sums up the evidence of many witnesses.

Then Paul answers. You noticed the very polite phrases with which Tertullus began his speech: observe that Paul can do the same thing very smoothly!

What does Paul say was the object of his going to Jerusalem? How much time had elapsed? Read Acts 21: 26, 27. 22: 30. 23: 11. 23: 32. 24: 1. See if your computation is the same as Paul's.

What does Paul say of his behavior in the temple and about the city? What does he say of the truth of his accusers?

Read again charge 3, above. Then read verse 14. Notice that Paul says that he serves "the God of *our* fathers." What things which these Jews believed does Paul here say that he believes? And what hope do they hold in common? Where are the Sadducees who do not believe in the resurrection? Evidently they have not come down to Cæsarea to this trial. Look again at verse 1. It says that "the high priest Ananias came down with *certain* elders." Evidently the high priest carefully selected his councilors this time so as not to have a quarrel among his supporters as he had before! He wants to appear well in the eyes of the governor!

In his defense before the mob in Jerusalem Paul had argued that he was guided by the God whom they worshiped. See 22:14. Here, 24:16, he claims the defense of a clear conscience. What is meant by "void of offense," etc.?

What does Paul say, verse 17, about his errand in Jerusalem? See also Acts 11:29. I Corinthians 16:1–4. Romans 15:26, 27. We must distinguish between "alms" and "offerings." "Alms" were for the people who were in need, Christians in Jerusalem who lacked the necessities of life. "Offerings" were for the treasury of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Many Jewish Christians still supported the mother church.

Again how does Paul say he behaved in the temple? What is said of Jews from Asia? See also 21:27–29.

Paul refers to his trial before the Jewish council in Jerusalem. What does he say of the results? What is "this one voice"? See 23:6. Why had Paul said that to the council?

Felix sees that Paul is not a criminal, that he is not a wrongdoer. He is accused by the Jews merely to put a stop to his effective work for Christianity. So Felix ends the trial, but does not announce the decision. He assures Paul that when the chief captain, who arrested him in Jerusalem, comes down he, Felix, will give his decision. See 21:37–39. 22:26–29. 23:26–30.

What special privileges were granted to Paul? See verse 23. We can feel sure that Paul used these privileges for the advancement of the work he was doing for Christianity.

XXXII. Paul's Appeal to Cæsar.

THIS lesson is of great importance; for, in the events here recorded, was an event of great moment to Christianity. Paul had been preaching in Roman provinces; but he had the ambition to preach in the very heart of the Empire, the city of Rome itself. The way was suddenly opened for him, not only to go to Rome, but to go under the escort of Roman soldiers and officers. True, he went as a prisoner, but he accomplished his mission. This was a great step toward the later events that made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. And Rome is to this day the center of the largest denomination of the Christian religion! "I appeal to Cæsar": these words, spoken by Paul, turned the current of the life of Christianity.

Now let us trace the events that led up to this. Paul was at Cæsarea, a prisoner. He had a trial before Felix, the Roman governor. Nothing definite was decided at the trial. However, he was kept in the prison, and was well treated. Here he stayed for two years. Felix was interested in this new religion. See Acts 24: 22. His wife was a Jewess. They found it interesting to listen to Paul explaining the new faith, and this they did often. Sometimes Felix was profoundly moved by the moral aspects of Paul's addresses.

In being kept in prison, Paul was not serving a sentence. Felix knew he had done nothing worthy of imprisonment, but he delayed setting him free. As long as he kept Paul in prison, the Jews were better pleased. And he thought that Paul's friends might pay a good price to get him free. Read Acts 24: 24–27.

After Paul had been in prison two years Felix ceased to be governor and Festus was the new governor. He came into the province to begin his work as governor, and came to Cæsarea. Soon he made a trip up to Jerusalem. Here the chief men among the Jews tried to get him to send Paul up there. Their idea was to get an opportunity to kill him; this was like the former plot. Now Festus refused to bring Paul up, but offered to have a new trial in Cæsarea. This was like the trial before Felix. The Jews accused Paul of serious offenses; Paul stoutly

affirmed his innocence. So Festus, to please the Jews, asks Paul to go to Jerusalem to be tried again. Read Acts 25: 1–9.

Now Paul had certain rights in the case. He was being tried by Roman law, and, as a Roman citizen, he had a right to be tried by the usual methods. The governor could not legally order him taken to Jerusalem, for the highest court in the province was this court in Cæsarea. So when Paul is asked if he will go to Jerusalem he can consent or refuse: it is his right. Read his answer and the reply of Festus. Acts 25: 10–12.

The appeal to Cæsar was an appeal to the Emperor in Rome itself. Paul had no notion of going back to Jerusalem: he wanted to go to Rome, and he seized the chance to be sent there!

Festus, the new governor, had visitors soon after this. His province was Judea. The province of Galilee was governed by Agrippa, but up there the governor was usually called "king." But he was under the Roman rule, and could do only what a governor could do. Agrippa and his wife Bernice came down to make a visit to their new neighbor; it was the polite thing to do. This was quite a long visit.

Festus saw the opportunity to get some advice that he needed. He was new to this work and did not understand Paul's case very well. Agrippa had been dealing with Jews for years. Festus has to send Paul as a prisoner to Rome to be tried again. And he has to send a statement of charges against him. Think how awkward it was for Festus to have the prisoner sent to Rome, but to have nothing against him. Paul had violated no law of the land. So Festus tells Agrippa about the case. They decide to have a hearing before Agrippa to see if he can make out just what the trouble is, and can devise a statement of charges to send to Rome with the prisoner.

This will be interesting for the guests and the host; and they decide to have the hearing the very next day. Of course, for Paul, there is comparatively little depending on the hearing: he can neither be acquitted nor condemned.

The story of the hearing is in our next lesson. The voyage to Rome was begun immediately after.

XXXIII. Paul's Address before Agrippa.

WE read in our last lesson about Festus, the new governor of the province of Judea, and of Herod Agrippa, called "king," of the province of Galilee. Herod had come down to Cæsarea to make a polite visit to his new neighbor. And it had been arranged that Paul should speak before them in order that Festus might know what accusation to send to Rome when Paul was sent there as a prisoner for another trial.

Who is this "king" Agrippa? He is of that infamous family of Herods that were noted for misrule and wickedness. One of them was governor at the time of the birth of Jesus, and it was of him that the story was told that he had the children slaughtered in order to kill Jesus. Another was governor at the time when Jesus was preaching in public. He had John the Baptist imprisoned, and then beheaded. And he was visiting his neighbor, Pilate, the Roman governor, in Jerusalem, at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. He saw Jesus, and "tried" him. Another Herod persecuted the Christians. See Acts 12: 1–3 and 12: 23. This Agrippa was the son of that man, Herod Agrippa.

Read again Acts 25: 23–27. This states clearly the reason for the hearing. Now go on with chapter 26. Make an analysis of the address of Paul.

I. The courteous salutation. Verses 1–3.

II. Verses 4, 5. The assertion that the Jews knew him to have been a Pharisee.

III. Verses 6, 7. What he is really accused of is the same hope that the leaders of the Hebrew race had held, the hope of the resurrection.

IV. Verses 9–11. Paul was conscientious in his persecutions of the Christians.

V. Verses 12–18. The vision on the road to Damascus.

VI. Verses 19, 20. His obedience to the vision.

VII. Verses 21–23. His activity in this has brought about this present trouble. But he is not to blame for the trouble.

With Paul the impulse to preach was very strong. He is supposed to be making a defense at a political trial, but the *prisoner* becomes a preacher, and addresses his judges from

that point of view. He addresses Festus and Agrippa each by name.

Read verses 30–32. This gives the general results. Agrippa's words sound like a regret; but it was no misfortune to Paul to be sent to Rome. It was just what he wanted!

Immediately after this Paul begins the voyage. He had been a prisoner two years. What had he done in that time? It is quite probable that he used a good deal of this time in writing letters to the churches; that, as his friends had unrestricted opportunity to visit him, he directed a great deal of work for the promotion of Christianity.

Review of Paul's Experiences as a Prisoner in Judea.

THIS review covers Acts 21 : 27 to the end of chapter 26. The story is from the time when the mob seized Paul in the temple to the time when he was about to sail away to Rome. The principal points to be recalled are as follows:

I. *The Arrest.* In the temple in Jerusalem Paul was worshiping. The mob, under the leadership of enemies of his from cities in Asia Minor, seized him and were dragging him out to kill him. The soldier-police arrested him and thus saved his life.

We found three important phrases used in the incident:

"Dost thou know Greek?"

"He spake in the Hebrew language."

"But I am a Roman born."

II. *Paul before the Council.* The next day after the arrest Paul was tried before the Jewish council. Here there were Pharisees and Sadducees, men who believed in the resurrection, and men who did not. And Paul set them to quarreling by saying that it was concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead that he was called in question.

III. *The Plot against Paul's Life.* There was a plan to bring him before the council again, and there were men who were ready to kill Paul between the prison and the council chamber. How many were there and how was the plot frustrated?

IV. *Paul's Trial before Felix the Governor.* Where was it? How was the journey thither made? What accusations were made against Paul?

V. *The Change of Governors.* The trial before Festus. What was "the appeal to Cæsar"?

VI. *Agrippa.* Who visited Festus, and why? In planning to send Paul to Rome for trial what puzzled Festus? How did he think Agrippa could help him in this?

What was Agrippa's opinion of Paul?

XXXIV. Paul Shipwrecked.

THE lesson is chapter 27 of Acts. Read the first eight verses. Take the map and trace this part of the voyage.

I. What is the name of the man in charge of the prisoners?

II. At Sidon what privilege did Paul have? All through this story we must realize that Paul was not treated like a criminal. The Romans had nothing against him.

III. At what point did the party change ships?

IV. Verses 9–13. It was late in the autumn. The small ships of that time were not safe vessels in which to navigate the Mediterranean Sea in winter. Paul advises wintering and continuing the voyage in the following spring.

V. Verses 13–20. The voyage is continued, but a severe storm breaks out. The ship was disabled. The consequence was that they drifted helplessly for two weeks, and the vessel was finally wrecked, as we shall see. But no lives were lost.

VI. Verses 21–26. Paul shows admirable calmness. He encourages the others on the ship.

VII. Verses 27–29. The approach to land was detected, and they cast anchors, to keep the ship from going ashore. This was done very clumsily, for the anchors were cast from the stern of the ship instead of from the bow!

VIII. Verses 30–38. The sailors tried to desert the ship in the dark. Paul detects the plan and prevents it. Paul succeeds in cheering the whole company: "then were they all of good cheer."

IX. Verses 39–40. When day came they could see their situation. They made an attempt such as their awkward situation permitted, to run the vessel into a bay that had a beach.

X. Verses 41–44. The vessel struck, and quickly began to go to pieces. The soldiers were responsible for the prisoners and were about to do what was common under such circumstances, to kill them to prevent their escape. As Paul is not a criminal, the centurion forbids the soldiers doing what they intended. But everybody gets safely to land. The island was Malta. Trace the voyage on the map.

XXXV. The Winter after the Shipwreck.

THE lesson passage is Acts 28: 1–15. First take the map and trace the voyage that was made, as told in chapter 27. Find Cæsarea, Sidon, Cyprus, Myra, Cnidus, Crete, Fair Havens, Cauda, Melita (or Malta).

While drifting about they had lost all reckoning. They did not know till they made inquiries on what land they had drifted. There is a bay in the island of Malta that is now called "Saint Paul's Bay," and it is believed to be the scene of the shipwreck.

Verse 2. The "barbarians" were not savages; it means about the same as "foreigners." Read I Corinthians 14: 11. The Jews called all other people "Gentiles." Greeks called all who were not Greeks "barbarians," and the Romans applied the same word to all not Romans. Remember that it was now the beginning of winter.

Verses 3–6. There is nothing supernatural in this story. Nor is it at all improbable. A snake was almost dormant from the cold, and as Paul gathered sticks for the fire the snake was roused just enough to sluggishly bite his hand, but not enough to poison him. It was easily shaken off, and no harm came of it. But this brings out the way superstitious minds work. The "barbarians" thought the bite of the snake was directed by a god who wanted vengeance on Paul, probably for killing someone. They thought that this god had intended Paul to be drowned. Would it be justice to drown a shipload of people to punish one man? Read Jonah 1: 1–15.

But, when Paul did not swell up and fall down dead, these superstitious people gave up entirely the idea that he was pursued by a god, and concluded that he was himself a god. This had a curious consequence: some of them were healed of diseases. It is not an uncommon thing to see people helped by coming to a confidence that a certain thing can be done. Discouragement, superstition, fear, and other things can be removed by hope and confidence. Sometimes people have physical disorders resulting from these states of mind, and can be helped physically by whatever will help the state of mind. When these people believed that a god had come to them they

gained enormously in confidence, and the stories of cures resulted.

Three months passed, and spring came again. A ship from Alexandria (in Egypt) had wintered at the island. Its name was represented by a sign, not by words. What was the name of the ship? This ship was going up toward Rome and this gave opportunity to continue the voyage. Find Syracuse and Rhegium. They "made a circuit" between these places: that is, it was not straight sailing, for the wind was contrary. But next day a south wind blew and it was easy sailing. In a day and night they came to Puteoli. This was the end of the voyage.

At this place Paul stayed a week with Christians whom he found. At Rome there were Christians who heard that Paul had landed at Puteoli, and they started down. Paul met them, probably in two groups, at "The Market of Appius and The Three Taverns." This was a measureless encouragement to Paul. It assured him of at least a few friends to help in the work in Rome. But how was it that there were Christians there? Not because any preaching of Christianity had yet been done in Rome. But Paul and other apostles had preached in cities where there were many travelers. And some of these were from Rome, and had carried the ideas of the new faith back to Rome with them.

Turn over to the book of Romans. We do not know when Paul wrote this letter, but probably before he went up to Jerusalem, and was arrested. Read Romans 15:25–27. Turn to the sixteenth chapter and read verses 3–5. "Prisca and Aquila"; that is, Priscilla and Aquila. Do you remember them? Turn to Acts 18:1–4 and also verse 26. These two people had worked with Paul in Corinth. They had come from Italy and we learn from Romans that they had gone back to Rome again. Of course they were enthusiastic Christians. You notice the phrase in Romans "the church that is in their house." It is easy, you see, to account for these Christians being in Rome and coming down to meet Paul.

Let us look at some other things in Romans. These few Christians were very earnest and steadfast. Paul wanted to go there and gather together a large church. Read Romans 1:8–15.

From Acts we learn that this man Aquila was a Jewish

Christian. So were others of the people to whom this letter was written. There were a good many who were of the Jewish race and had adopted the Christian faith. Much of the argument of the book of Romans is directed to them. But there were Gentiles in Rome who were Christians, too. Read Romans 11:1 and verse 13.

We see, then, that the book of Romans is a letter written by Paul a few years before he went there; that it was written to people in Rome who were Christians; that some of these Christians were of the Jewish race, and some were Gentiles.

In the letter, Paul has to argue for some things on which it is hard for Jews and Gentiles to agree. In one chapter he takes up the question of the sacredness of days, and of "clean and unclean" food. We have considered that question before; but in Rome and other places it was a more complicated question because food was placed on the altars of temples as offerings to idols, and then was sold as food for people. And the question was whether a Christian should eat food that had been offered to idols. In this chapter Paul urges each man to make these questions a matter of conscience, doing in each case what he believes right, instead of having a rigid rule to go by. And he urges that one man shall not condemn those who do not agree with him. This is the fourteenth chapter. Read it through carefully.

XXXVI. Paul's Last Years in Rome.

THE lesson passage is Acts 28: 16–31. In our last lesson we traced the final stage of Paul's journey to Rome, and saw that he was greeted by friends who were Christians, and that this brought great joy to him. Paul went as a prisoner; but let us realize that the Romans had nothing against him. The centurion on the voyage had been very considerate of him. When Paul arrived in Rome there was no haste about a trial. Indeed we know nothing positive about the outcome. But we are told briefly the conditions under which he lived. Read Acts 28, verses 16, 30 and 31. Also the marginal reading with verse 16 (Revised Version). We see that the special privilege was granted to Paul to have a house, and also a single soldier to guard him. It may be that this house was hired for him by these friends, and others. He preached there constantly. Read verse 20. Evidently he had a chain on his ankles, or was chained to some object so that he could not easily move.

It is very interesting to see that almost immediately Paul called together the Jews of Rome, that is, the Jews who still held to the Jewish religion. He wanted to win some of them to the new faith. He let only three days go by when he called the chief men of the Jewish synagogue together. They consulted about Paul and his ideas, and arranged a time for a general meeting. Read what Paul said to these men, verses 17–20. And read what they answered, verses 21–22. Paul explains why he comes to Rome as a prisoner, but is careful to keep the good-will of these Jews by saying "not that I had aught to accuse my nation of." And he states what he had said before, that the essential point of this whole trouble that he was in was the belief in the resurrection; and this is a belief which these men hold. Paul says, "because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

They appointed a day for a meeting, and when the day came a great number of Jews came to Paul's dwelling. How long was the sermon? "From morning till evening"! Some of the Jews believed and accepted his ideas, and some did not believe. A discussion arose and they "agreed not among themselves";

and the meeting broke up, and the disputing men went away. We learn this from the statement "when they agreed not among themselves they departed." But Paul could not restrain himself from giving a denunciation of those who did not believe, and declared that he would preach to Gentiles. Read verses 25–31. This declaration that he would preach to the Gentiles sounds familiar to us after what we have read of Paul's experiences in other places where Jews disputed and Paul condemned them for not accepting his teaching.

We have come now to the end of the book of Acts. What became of Paul after this? We cannot be sure, but it is generally believed that Paul was finally put to death in Rome, not as a punishment for the things of which the Jews charged him, but in a persecution of the Christians. You remember that other apostles were put to death by the enemies of Christianity. In Rome there were cruel persecutions of Christians, and many were put to death. Probably Paul was one of the martyrs. But, later, Christianity was adopted by the Roman Emperor, Constantine, and was made the religion of the Empire.

While in Rome, Paul wrote some letters in the work of promoting Christianity. You remember Timothy, who went with Paul on some of his missionary work. You will find two letters to Timothy. The second one was probably written at this time. Turn to II Timothy 1:15–18. There Paul speaks with gratitude of a man who had helped him much, who "was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, sought me diligently and found me." And with great earnestness Paul urges Timothy to preach; Paul must have expected death when he wrote II Timothy 4:1–8.

We should realize that this work of the apostles in preaching and establishing churches was begun before any of the books of the New Testament were written. We have seen the purpose of writing the letters to the churches. These letters were probably read not only by the church to which they were addressed, but were carried about for the instruction of a number of the churches. Copies were made, and they have been treasured, and have come down even to us.

We have seen, too, that letters were written to individuals, as to Timothy. The four gospels were written for instruction in

the life and teachings of Jesus. Thus the New Testament grew up in the course of years, because each book in it was needed in a special way in the work of building up the churches in the faith of Christianity. Turn to the last book of the New Testament, to Revelation 1:9–11. You see that it is a message to seven churches in Asia Minor, including Ephesus, to which the book "Ephesians" was written. These books have come down to us and are a part of our Bible.

HELPS FOR TEACHERS

HELPS FOR TEACHERS.

In preparation for teaching this course of lessons the teacher would do well to read a little book by Professor Carpenter, "Life in Palestine when Jesus Lived." It can be obtained through the Unitarian Sunday-School Society, 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. Particular attention should be given to the explanation of the manner of government, and of the religious parties among the Jews.

In brief, the country was governed by the Romans. But the Romans did little except to keep order and collect taxes. The laws that had most to do with daily conduct were the Jewish religious laws. The Romans permitted the Jews to manage their own affairs in many matters.

Sometimes Roman law and Jewish law came into conflict. You will recall when Jesus was accused and put on trial before Pilate, that Pilate said "Take ye him and judge him according to your law." This was because Pilate did not believe Jesus had done any wrong against the Roman government; Jesus had been accused of violation of the religious laws of the Jews. But the priests answered Pilate, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death"; that is, the Jewish church courts *were not permitted by Roman law to inflict capital punishment.*

The priests were determined that Jesus should be put to death. Pilate weakly yielded to their demands and sentenced Jesus to death by the Roman method, crucifixion. Stoning was the common Jewish method of capital punishment when the Jews were permitted to use it. (They did use it for Stephen's death, as related in one of our lessons.)

This illustrates the situation of the relation of Jewish and Roman law. The same situation continued all through the time of our lessons. Paul was tried by the Jewish court and also by the Roman court. It is well to get a clear idea of this matter.

The authorities of the Jewish church had soldiers. They were not Roman soldiers but were Jewish. There was a garrison of Roman soldiers in Jerusalem as in other cities. The Roman soldiers assisted in enforcing Roman law. But they

did not enter the temple because of the intense resentment on the part of the Jews against interference with their religion. The Jewish soldiers in Jerusalem were principally a temple guard. They preserved order in and about the temple. At the times of the great feasts when thousands of Jews were in Jerusalem this guard often had much to do because of fanatics.

It was a company not of Roman soldiers but of Jewish soldiers that arrested Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus taunted them with having taken advantage of the darkness for the arrest, and reminded them that he had "taught openly in the temple" and they did not dare interfere openly. When Jesus had been crucified and his body had been laid in the tomb, the Jewish authorities went to Pilate and asked that the tomb be guarded. He answered, "*You have a guard;* make the tomb as secure as you care to." Pilate referred to the temple guard. It was not a company of Roman soldiers who guarded the tomb where the body of Jesus lay.

Years later, when Paul was arrested, he was arrested by Roman soldiers because his enemies, Jews, had raised a riot in the city. The Roman soldiers arrested Paul and thereby saved his life, for the mob were about to stone him to death.

The parties, too, among the Jews have an important bearing on some of our lessons. These are explained in Professor Carpenter's little book just referred to.

It should not be thought of as a strange thing that Jesus chose disciples or apostles. In those times great teachers used that method of disseminating their ideas. You remember that it is said of Paul that "he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel." Indeed, the boys who "went to school" then went to the synagogue and learned to read by reading the (written) books of the religion of the Jews, our Old Testament, and other Jewish writings. Jesus did as other teachers did, chose men who would accept and in turn teach his ideas. Our first lessons are of the call and the preparation of these men for their work. Later lessons trace their progress in the work.

The American Revised Version of the Bible is earnestly recommended for class use. Each pupil should have a copy and use it constantly. The maps in this version are admirable; and maps are essential in this course of lessons. Each pupil should have also a copy of the pupil's manual of these lessons.

The Use of Pictures.

Admirable pictures for illustrating Biblical scenes can be obtained at a very small price by sending to the W. A. Wilde Company, 120 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. It is sufficient, in ordering, to give the number of each picture.

For these lessons use the following Wilde Pictures:

Lesson Number	Picture Number	Picture Title
1	47	Christ and the Fishermen.
	57	Calling of Matthew.
2	77	Parable of the Sower.
3	121	Christ and Zebedee's Children.
	112	Christ and the Young Ruler.
4	141	Christ Before Pilate.
5	272	Appearance of Christ to Peter.
	166	Walk to Emmaus.
6	93	"I am the Light of the World."
7	453	St. Peter.
	278	St. John the Evangelist.
8	262	Judas Accepting the Silver.
	199	Jerusalem. Potter's Field.
9	394	The Day of Pentecost.
10	282	Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate.
11	—	—
12	283	Death of Ananias.
	602	Death of Sapphira.
13	280	Liberation of St. Peter [Detail].
14	395	St. Stephen.
15	396	St. Stephen Preaching and Before the Council.
	392	The Stoning of Stephen.
16	227	Housetops of Samaritan Houses.
	312	Samaria. Jacob's Well.
17	636	Gaza.
18	284	Conversion of St. Paul.
19	452	St. Paul.
20	393	Peter in the House of Cornelius.
	302	Jaffa. House of Simon the Tanner.
21	601	The Deliverance of Peter from Prison.
22	277	St. Mark.
	401	Elymas Struck with Blindness.
23	—	—

Lesson Number	Picture Number	Picture Title
24	644	Conversion of Jailer.
	645	Paul and Silas in Jailer's House.
25	455	General View of Athens.
	457	Mars' Hill, Athens.
	460	Paul Preaching at Athens.
26	449	Paul Preaching at Ephesus.
27	646	Christ or Diana.
28	648	Paul Takes leave of Ephesus.
	649	The Prophecy of Agabus.
29	446	Paul Rescued from the Multitude.
30	311	Cæsarea. Paul's Prison.
31	650	Paul Before Felix and Drusilla.
32	651	Paul Before Festus.
33	—	—
34	447	Paul Shipwrecked.
35	598	Paul Casting off the Viper.
36	304	Pozzuoli.
	315	Rome. Appian Way.

Where there are blanks in the foregoing list the following pictures are recommended.

Lesson 11. Picture: Saints John and Peter; Number 780, Perry Picture Co., Malden, Mass.

Lesson 23. Picture: Saints Paul and Mark. Perry Pictures, 781.

Lesson 33. Picture: Saint Paul (head). Perry Pictures, 343 N.

Underwood and Underwood's Pictures with Stereopticon.

This firm has prepared a set of thirty pictures under the title "Travel Studies on the Apostolic Heroes." They are photographs of present-day scenes in places where great events occurred.

In using the pictures disregard the numbers on the front of the pictures and use the numbers on the back.

Their greatest use is, of course, in giving a very real idea of the scenery of places rather than in reproducing events. But in some ways life has changed but little in those lands, and the men and animals that appear in these pictures help to make vivid the people who live in our stories from the Bible.

A list of the pictures follows:

1. Garden of Gethsemane.
2. Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.
3. Jerusalem from the North-east.
4. The Site of the Temple in Jerusalem.
5. Jerusalem from the South-east.
6. A Street in Jerusalem.
7. A Street in Jerusalem.
8. St. Stephen's Gate, Jerusalem.

Pictures 1–8. *Scenes in Jerusalem illustrating lessons in Division II.*

9. Hill of Samaria (*Lesson* 16).
10. Herod's Columns, Samaria (*Lesson* 16).
11. A Caravan of Camels, Jaffa (*Lesson* 20).
12. Lydda [Acts ix: 32].
13. House of Simon the Tanner, Jaffa (*Lesson* 20).
14. Cæsarea. Where Paul was tried before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa (*Lessons* 31, 32, 33).
15. Road to Damascus (*Lesson* 18).
16. Covered Street in Damascus (*Lesson* 18).
17. A "Meat-shop on Horse-back."
18. Athens, old and new.
19. Athens. From Wall of Parthenon.
20. Athens. Mars' Hill.
21. Corinth.
22. Corinth. Ruins of Temple.

Lesson 25, *Pictures* 18–22.

23. Cæsarea (*Lessons* 31, 32, 33).
24. Fortress, Sidon [Acts xxvii: 1–4] (*Lesson* 34).
25. Underground Chapel, Sicily.
26. Rome. Appian Way.
27. Rome.
28. Rome. Ruins of Forum.
29. Rome. Ruins.
30. Rome. Altar of St. Paul's Church.

Lesson 36, *Pictures* 26–30.

The Method of the Lessons.

The lessons are addressed directly to the pupils. They aim not merely at supplying the teacher with material which the teacher is to arrange for class use: they present the material in logical order for class use.

They were, indeed, first produced in actual use with classes. Explanations, Biblical references, questions, map work, etc. are given, without change of type, in an order in which the

subjects of the lessons may be developed for the apprehension of the pupils. Our lessons include a variety of subjects and the aim has been to *adapt the method of each lesson to the subject which it is to teach.*

Teachers are urged to follow the method of the lessons, supplementing each by such use of pictures and other material as may be deemed desirable.

A Sketch of the Course.

The lessons are arranged in five divisions. These divisions are rather sharply marked by historical events. The first division, "The Disciples with Jesus," considers the preparation of the apostles for their work. The death of Jesus and the regathering of the apostles in Jerusalem after they were scattered in fear by the death of Jesus, make a greatly changed situation. In this changed situation was built up "The Community in Jerusalem," the title of the second division.

For a considerable length of time this work went forward. But the community was shattered by a violent persecution. Pilate, the strict Roman governor, was withdrawn and his successor was lax. This persecution made the decidedly changed situation of the third division, "Scattered by Persecution." As the apostles fled they preached; and they discovered that men far and wide were eager to hear this new faith preached. This led to definite effort to propagate the new faith by missionary journeys.

The principal man to make such journeys was Paul. This makes the fourth division, "Paul's Missionary Journeys." The arrest of Paul brought this work to a sharp termination. During the years covered by the fifth division, "Closing Years of Paul's Work," a good deal of writing was done; thus progress was made in producing the first literature of Christianity, parts of the New Testament.

The conditions, then, change with each division and these conditions should be kept in mind in presenting the lessons.

Division I.

The lessons in this division contain material which is familiar to pupils who have had a thorough course of study of the life of Jesus. But in presenting these lessons it is of the first import-

ance to get a new point of view. In studying the life of Jesus we try to get his ideas, his hopes and aims.

But in these lessons we should aim to get *the point of view of the disciples.* From our previous study of Jesus we know what he had in mind when he called them, but in beginning these lessons let us realize that *the disciples did not know.* In all the lessons in this division it will be necessary to make the effort to get at how the events looked to the disciples.

There will be a strong tendency for the discussions in the class to run in the channels of previous knowledge, the knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus. The wise teacher will guide it into this new channel, the aim to get the point of view of the disciples.

One of the surest ways to accomplish this is to attempt to put yourself in their place. Imagine what it was to be called away from their regular work and their homes to follow a new teacher who had just appeared; to be sent out to preach after a short course of instruction. As we have studied the life of Jesus we have learned something of the idea of Jesus of "the Kingdom of Heaven." It is well worth while, in our present study, to get at what the disciples believed about this. Remember that they acted on *their* belief.

In our sympathy for Jesus, especially in the last tragic hours of his life, we are inclined to blame severely the disciples for their desertion of him: "they all forsook him and fled." They were indeed ashamed of their weakness and cowardice afterwards. But again try to see things from their point of view. They were surprised beyond measure by the sudden turn of affairs — the arrest of Jesus. Let us realize that this arrest, followed in a few hours by the crucifixion, seemed to them like a complete disaster for their master and his work. It seemed to them that there was nothing left to fight for, no cause to which to be loyal, no work in which to be faithful.

Then build up a clear idea of the returning courage of the disciples as they came to the great experience that though Jesus had died his influence was still potent in their lives; that though their Master was taken away the great work could and ought to go on.

In thus approaching the study of the period with which the lessons in this division deal the relations of the disciples to Jesus

will be seen in a new light. Then remember that in the lessons that follow we are studying the work of the men who had passed through these experiences.

Lesson One.

"What great preacher had been at work before Jesus began to preach?" This refers to John the Baptist. He and Jesus were cousins, were about the same age, and had grown up near together. Of course they had talked together about religious ideas and their plans for preaching. John began his work first and baptized Jesus who went to him. Each in his preaching testified to the greatness of the other; each believed very much in the other. John the Baptist said of Jesus, "one cometh after me who is greater than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose"; Jesus said of John, "Among them that are born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist."

In the references to Matthew (or Levi) the expression "the place of toll" is used. Remember that the Romans ruled that country and collected taxes. In Galilee Herod had the title of "King" but he was little or nothing more than a Roman governor (but not a Roman by race). Matthew was a collector of taxes for the Roman government but he was a Jew. The tax-collectors were commonly despised by their fellow-Jews. They were "Publicans," and the word was frequently coupled with "sinners." This gives much importance to the reference to Luke 5:27–32. Professor Carpenter's "Life in Palestine when Jesus lived" should be read carefully.

Lesson Two.

The teacher will, of course, do well to read the references through in preparation, and get a clear idea of the events. In class they should be read carefully and thoroughly discussed.

Lesson Three.

Endeavor to understand the idea that the disciples had of the Kingdom of Heaven. We may be inclined to say that they could hardly have expected that Jesus would become a king, that the idea of gaining independence from Rome was preposterous.

But Herod was "King," and it may be that some men wanted to gain for Jesus that position in order that the Jews might be governed by one of their own people.

Herod governed Galilee and Pilate (a Roman) governed Judea. But complete independence from Rome may even have been dreamed of. It was not a great many years after the death of Jesus that the attempt was actually made to gain independence. The desperate siege of Jerusalem and its defense make one of the most tragic events of history.

Lessons Four, Five, and Six.

Here it is of the utmost importance to adhere to the aim to get *the point of view of the disciples.* For example, do not let the discussion run on the question of the resurrection of Jesus, but follow the state of mind of the disciples through these events, and *see what they believed about the resurrection.* The great point is that these men got power and convictions and hope and courage; and then they proceeded to do a great work.

The teacher may be interested in seeing that there are, in the stories of Jesus after the resurrection, three distinct points of view regarding what the disciples saw. They are,

(1) That Jesus came as a disembodied spirit.

(2) That he came as a spirit having an ethereal body; a body which could come into the room when the doors were shut.

(3) That he came as he had been in life, his natural body inhabited again by his spirit, the body having flesh and bones, and also bearing the marks of the crucifixion.

Thus the stories differ. It is not necessary for us to choose among them. It is scarcely profitable to discuss with the pupils these matters. The lessons aim to lead the thoughts of the pupils to matters more profitable.

Division II.

In the lessons in this division we encounter a very interesting situation, the formation of the community in Jerusalem. The events in our lessons in Division I took place in a wide area: the disciples, with Jesus, traveled far and wide in their country. In Division II the geographical area is very limited, — the city of Jerusalem.

The "apostles," as the eleven specially chosen disciples are now to be called, gathered in Jerusalem, and soon hundreds of disciples gathered with them. And this group of people formed themselves into a community to live as one great family. Before teaching the lessons of this division the teacher will do well to read Lesson VII (pages 19 and 20) and what is said of the community on pages 26, 31, 32, and 36. This will give an idea of the manner of life in the community.

This communism of early Christianity has been imitated in modern times. People have believed that that kind of life was essential to the spirit of Christianity. It is evident, however, that the community in Jerusalem was the outgrowth of the comradeship of the twelve disciples with Jesus.

For the distinction between the disciples and the apostles see Lesson II.

Lesson Seven.

On page 19 are references to Luke and Acts. The story of "The Promise of Power" is really one of the resurrection stories. After completing in the class the presentation of the material of this lesson, if time allows read other stories in the latter part of the four gospels dealing with the same thought. Remember that the *writing* of these stories did not take place for several years after the death of Jesus. Do not be surprised at differences in them.

Show the pupils where, in general, they should look in the gospels for any story that they want: that stories of the early life of Jesus, his baptism, etc. should be looked for early in a gospel; that stories of the last events should be looked for late in a gospel.

From this lesson onward the work will be largely in the book of Acts, but there are frequent references to other books of the New Testament. The pupils should gain facility in finding important passages.

Lesson Eight.

This lesson is very fully worked out, and a good deal of it will afford excellent practice in finding references in the New Testament.

Lesson Nine.

The story of "The Day of Pentecost" is one that is difficult to explain. Some people reject the story; but "stranger things have happened." It is well to approach the story without prejudice, because of the importance of this event in the story of early Christianity.

It is important, however, to distinguish between statements of fact and attempted explanations in the account in Acts. For example, "There came [from heaven] a sound . . . ." Here is a statement of a phenomenon, the sound. But why does the writer say "from heaven"? Thus the story can be analyzed.

Lesson Ten.

Again we have a story with an apparently miraculous element. Even if we believe that all things come about by natural causes it is not necessary to discredit the story. Take it as it stands.

Lessons Eleven to Fifteen.

In the progress of these lessons we trace a number of problems and difficulties of the community in Jerusalem. In each lesson picture the situation clearly, for each step is important in the progress of the story of Christianity.

The persecution of Christianity probably came after the withdrawal of Pilate as Roman governor. It is probable that his successor was lax. Remember what the priests said to Pilate when they wanted him to condemn Jesus to death, "It is not lawful for us to put a man to death." The Roman government permitted the Jewish church to administer many of the laws according to the Jewish code. But capital punishment was in the hands of the Roman authorities only. So when Stephen was stoned *by the same men who obtained the crucifixion of Jesus*, it shows that Roman law was (temporarily) laxly enforced. Stoning was a common method of capital punishment among the Jews in ancient times.

Division III.

The events in Division I occurred over a wide area. The events in Division II occurred in the restricted area of the city of Jerusalem. But in the present division we shall have much

use for a good map of that part of the world. The American Revised Version of the Bible, which is recommended for use with these lessons, has excellent maps. If the pupils are not supplied with these the teacher will do well to get a map for class use. Ask for a map of "Paul's Missionary Journeys"; such a map includes that whole region.

Lesson Sixteen.

Recall who the Samaritans were. Read the stories in Luke 10: 25–37 and John 4: 5–26 in order to get the expression of the deep-seated prejudice that had existed between the Jews and Samaritans for centuries. Jesus rose above that prejudice, and so did the Christian church. Race prejudice dies hard; but in this lesson the apostles rose above it.

Lesson Seventeen.

On page 45 are preliminary questions. For the answers turn to Acts 6: 1–6. Notice the names that lead the list, Stephen and Philip.

Lesson Eighteen.

In making an estimate of the character of Paul from what is told of him in this lesson it is necessary to emphasize his perfect sincerity. Even in cruel persecutions he was doing what *he believed* he ought to do. And emphasize next his great energy. That energy was turned into a new channel by the great event in this lesson.

Lesson Nineteen.

Let us realize that the *methods* of the persecutor were not adapted to the building up of Christianity. Paul, with the best intentions of loyal service to his newly adopted faith, sadly bungled in his endeavor to be useful. But in time he gained wisdom and became the greatest apostle of Christianity.

Lesson Twenty.

In our lessons we have interesting questions of places, of races, of customs and laws, and other things. In this lesson,

and in others that follow, we observe the very interesting process of Christianity breaking away from the limitations of the Jewish church, with its faith, religious customs, ancient forms, rites and ceremonies, and, above all, its *authority*.

Lesson Twenty-one.

It will be well for the teacher, in preparing for the teaching of this lesson, to re-read in Professor Carpenter's "Life in Palestine when Jesus Lived" the explanation of the government of the country.

The Herods governed parts of Palestine for generations. Under them the people suffered many things, for they governed for the most part harshly and unjustly.

Division IV.

In this division we come to a distinct development of Christianity. Two facts are of prime importance: (1) Christianity had a new center, a new "head-quarters," in the city of Antioch. Christianity had moved away from the head-quarters of the Jewish church. And (2) a new method of propagating the faith was adopted, — the method of sending out missionaries to preach and *to organize churches.*

It was in this new development of Christianity that Paul found his place for his life-work. The first lesson of this division (Lesson XXII) links Paul with the work he was to do. Read again, carefully, the latter part of page 53, and page 54. Review them in class in beginning Lesson XXII. Lesson XXIII develops still further this important matter of Christianity organizing itself, and increasing itself by active missionary work.

Lesson Twenty-four.

This lesson contains a story which gives us a glimpse at Christianity, not as a great growing organization but as a power in the inner life of men. Bring out clearly the fine spirit of the men who sang in the prison.

Lesson Twenty-five.

The short passage known as Paul's Sermon on Mars' Hill is one of the great passages of the Bible. Much is gained if pupils

will commit to memory such passages, or at least some of the great sentences from them.

Lessons Twenty-six to Twenty-eight.

Use the map faithfully in order to give greater concreteness to the events in these places and to the laborious journeys of the apostles. And use imagination generously in reproducing the scenes. Realize that those were stirring times and exciting events, and also that they had great consequences.

In the review of Paul's missionary journeys carefully avoid details; the object of that review is to get a *comprehensive* idea of that whole great movement.

Division V.

The closing lesson of the previous division (Lesson XXVIII) traced the journey of Paul to Jerusalem. There, as we shall learn in detail, he was arrested and began an imprisonment that continued several years; indeed, we have no certainty that he was ever free again. That arrest makes the beginning of this division.

Lessons Twenty-nine to Thirty-three.

In these lessons we have the stories of important events in Paul's experience. Into these lessons enter questions of Jewish law and Roman law, of religious ceremonies and customs, of languages, and of race-prejudices. In preparation for teaching these lessons it will be well to read again in Professor Carpenter's "Life in Palestine when Jesus Lived" the explanation of the government of the time, the Roman courts and the Jewish council.

Lesson Twenty-nine.

This lesson presents important material. The relations of Roman, Greek, and Hebrew at that period make the time a great crisis in the history of the world.

The lessons that follow picture to us the Jewish council (an ecclesiastical court), before which Paul was tried (Lesson XXX); a Roman court, the highest in the province presided over by

the governor himself (Lesson XXXI); Paul's appeal to the highest court in the empire (Lesson XXXII); and an informal hearing, not a trial, during which Paul gave one of the existing accounts of his conversion.

In using the Review of Paul's Experiences as Prisoner in Judea avoid details and give the pupils *a comprehensive view* of the whole matter.

Lessons Thirty-three to Thirty-six.

These last lessons deal with the voyage of Paul to Rome as a prisoner in order to be tried before the emperor and with his life in Rome. During the time of his imprisonment in Judea and of his life in Rome it is probable that Paul did a good deal of writing — letters to the churches which he had established. Some of these letters are found in our New Testament.

In these lessons, as opportunity presents itself, lead the pupils into greater familiarity with the New Testament. Useful results can be obtained by so simple a device as this: have the pupils note the page on which a book of the New Testament begins and on which it ends and make a rapid mental calculation of the number of pages in the book. Have them compare the lengths of books, determine which are longer and which are shorter. This helps toward concreteness in their knowledge of what can be found in the New Testament.

Of course the pupils should commit to memory the names of the books of the New Testament. And they should have practice in finding passages in each book.

Special Note.

On pages 90 and 91 are questions. The Romans had great difficulty in governing the Jews. The Jews resented the presence of the Roman officers in Palestine and many of them made trouble for the Roman officers of the law at every opportunity. The Romans were, therefore, greatly irritated with the Jews and were inclined to harshness in their dealings with them.

Paul was a Jew and had a deeply-rooted affection for the old associations of the religion of his early life. When he went up to Jerusalem he worshiped in the temple. But the Jews made

trouble for him during his missionary journeys and in Jerusalem. Paul wanted, however, to present to them the truth as he saw it.

Paul had the rights of Roman citizenship, and he often needed them. He did wisely to be conciliatory toward the Romans and keep their protection. Paul's great aim during his trials was to get taken to Rome. He would go most safely as a prisoner of the Romans, and he would have opportunity to fulfil his great ambition to preach in Rome and establish a church in the capital of the great Roman empire.

How little Paul or any of the apostles dreamed of the tremendous results of their labors! Their world was a small world, consisting of western Asia, northern Africa, and southern Europe: the part of the world surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Mediterranean Sea means "the sea in the middle of the earth." They knew just that part of the world, and believed the world to be flat. Life has expanded since then; but the impulse of Christianity has had measureless results in shaping modern life in the most advanced nations of the world. And still the influence of Jesus and his apostles widens. There is a new meaning in the great commission "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel."

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